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THE MANIAC:

AND

OTHER POEMS,

BY

GEORGE SHEPARD BURLEIGH.

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TO

The Growing Heart of Humanity,

LONG TAUGHT BY

SUFFERING AND LOSS,

THIS VOLUME

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POEMS.

THE MANIAC.

THERE are two graves, and they are far apart,
But I have scattered flowers on both to-day:
Children were weeping over one, a fair
Young girl's, whom they had dearly loved: and one
Was a poor Maniac's, newly filled, and smoothed
With soft green turf, where he might calmly sleep,
After his horrid life-dream.
Once long since
I saw him wandering lone, as he was wont,
With head uncovered, and his straggling locks
Blazing into the air. Deep trenches ploughed
By wild thought, tracked his cheek, and in each line
Sat an insatiate demon of despair.
His dark dilated eyes glared wildly out
On vacancy, as if their orbs had caught

A sudden glimpse of the Eternal Horrors
That crowd the infinite Dark, and could not turn
From that dread vision. Fearfully his clenched
And bony hand smote down the viewless forms,
That gave the air he breathed a hue of hell;
While ever and anon he spurned the earth,
And muttered "Dead! dead! dead!" and then, oft-times,
His maniac laugh rang dismally from out
The hollow chambers of his desolate heart,
The knell of past affections, joys and hopes.
He shunned the dwellings and the paths of men,
And trod the loneliest woods, what time the owl
With boding cry, like wasted manhood's sob,
Made the night-echoes tremulous with fear:
Chiefly he sought the low swamp's trackless waste,
Where the white fog hung heaviest, and the shade
Of the thick cedar, and the solemn pine,
Shed grateful horrors o'er his starless Soul.
The night-birds flapped their pinions by his cheek,
And the hoarse frog croaked out his clamorous note
As he went by, and the shrill 'katydids'
Shrieked their sharp contest in his heedless ears:
But when he pealed his wild and maniac laugh,
Till the deep bosom of the old woods shook
All else grew voiceless, and, with quicker beat,
Dark vans to eddies smote the sleeping fog:
Even the fire-flies smothered up their lamps,

That, like the flash of multitudinous swords
In some far war-field, gave incessant gleams;
While the dim line of congregated hills
Sent back their answer. The benighted swain
Caught quick, and held in long suspense, his breath,
As sudden memories of old legends came,
Taught on his nurse's knee, of the Black Fox—
Scotland's dread devil—and his marvellous deeds.
His eye would glance with quick and anxious look,
At the live shadows of the moving boughs
Beside him, as, with longer strides, he sped
To the far star-beam of his cottage light.

O who, that marked the wretched madman then,
Lonely in heart and haunts, had seen in his,
The manly features of young Donaldane,
Whose heart was once affection's quiet nest;
His soul the mother of high thoughts and pure,
Fit for an Angel's love, save that a pride
Too tender for a breast whose every pore
Was instinct with quick life, within him dwelt!

He was a child of Passion and of Thought;
Thought plumed to soar in heaven, not armed to delve;
To win by flight the goal, which others seek
By weary plodding; Passion warm with Love
That knows no hiding, earnest, open, deep.
Though he read not the spirit-life of things

In their eternal meaning—their God's-word,—
Nature was something more to him than what
The visible pictured to the visual orb:
Brooks were not simple brooks, but liquid thoughts,
Uttered in ripples on the pebbled shore,
Which filled his soul with their soft melody;
And sisterly sweet flowers, with honey lips,
Were dear companions, whispering blessed things,
Fraught with the kind humanities of love:
The blue lake seen by starlight, with its soft
Daguerreotype of heaven, the moss-clad rocks,
With time-wrought records of the buried Past;
Valley and hill, green trees and waving fields,
Were beings which had life; and each by turns,
In its own language, prophesied to him:
And oft, to cheat the sad hour of its grief,
He chanted their mute oracles in song.
The love he gave dumb natures was not lost;
For, though they made his soul no answering vow,
Yet they in him begot new kindnesses,
And nourished old affections; lent his heart
Sublime ideals of a purer life,
And a more high communion. Things which men
Pass thoughtless, or behold with icy heart,
He met with such kind heed that, day by day,
He grew into a very brotherhood
With them, and they at length, were as a part

Of his own being. With how much higher flight
Man's soaring soul o'ertops insentient things,
With so much nobler love and fellowship
Would he have wedded his warm heart to man,
But iron CUSTOM bound its withering chain
Upon his bosom, and drove back the pulse
Of its deep, earnest life: CONVENTION laid
Her rigid finger on the burning lips
Of his great soul, to dam the upgushing thought;
And all his young affections run to waste,
Too freely lavished on ideal things.

Early repulsed with cold neglect, or stung
With colder pity, he became acquaint
With bitterness, and armed himself with Pride,
That bosom-traitor to the wounded heart,
To guard his bleeding hope; and, in such mood,
Even kindly Nature lost her power to heal.
Her soothings, like a mother's fond caress
Of an o'erfretful child, would oft provoke
A deeper restlessness, and plant new pangs
Into the growing sorrow of his soul.
When from a human shrine the priceless pearl
Of his rich love was blindly cast aside,
As nothing worth, he would go forth to lay
The slighted offering at Nature's feet,
And turn to weep; for even in *her* courts

Where breathed his holiest worship, the same heart
From which he fled ruled there; for, as he passed,
The very birds, whose untaught melody
He loved so well, would shun him and grow mute,
And the fleet rabbit bound in fear away.
It grieved him sorely that perfidious man
Had taught them terror, who were born for joy.
With yearnings vain, and soft and tender words,
With gifts hung on the rocks and forest boughs,
He strove to banish from their timid breasts
The fear, which barred them from his willing love;
But they had learned to shun the insidious foe,
Whose cruel snares and cunningly laid baits
Beset them, hedging every woodland path,
And whose fell engines, with perfidious aim,
Showered death and wounds among their startled tribes;
Too well they knew the upright form of man
Swathed a Soul fallen from its first estate,
For when, ere taught to shun him, they had brought
The humble offerings of their little hearts,
With the dumb utterance of a wordless love,
In song or gambol,—bondage, or the knife
Of sateless gluttony, repaid their boon:
So oft betrayed, perchance, a wiser heart
Than bird's or beast's might know not whom to trust.

The mournful thoughts by such repulses wak'd
Grew dark, and deepened into faithlessness
In man's heart, and the great Heart of the world.
He saw unlove, distrust, and naked hate,
And the long visage of hypocrisy;
Saw man a traitor to his fellow man,
A tyrant there, and here a cringing slave:
Heard the loud shout of myriad-handed Wrong,
Drowning the death-cry of his bleeding prey;
And starving *millions* cursing the great heavens
That rained not bread into their shrivelled maws;
While the fat locustry of *Priest* and *Lord*
Rolled by, in pride of fratricidal pomp.
A thousand noble hearts had swelled and snapt,
Finding no answer to their cry for love:
A thousand famished hearts gnawed on themselves,
Hearts, like his own, too weak to stand erect
In calm self-trusting, and too proud to beg.
Over all Nature universal war
Made ravage, and the might of Terror reigned;
Bird preyed on bird, brute brute, and man on all.
To him the eternal Asking came, as come
It must to every earnest soul, "Why thus
Runs Anarch Misrule its perpetual round,
If Order fills the throne; why Discord howl,
If the Great Law be jarless Harmony?"
Alas! in him that dread eternal WHY

Unanswered rang, and he became its prey.
For every lost beam of his fading trust,
The whole world seemed more false and meaningless.
By turns he fought and fled the growing doubt,
But like a fiend it haunted all his steps,
Blotting the glory from the universe,
Till o'er his soul the native joy of things
Could pour no light through Evil's full eclipse.

He heard the shrill-blown clarion of Reform
Summon stout hearts to battle on the wrong;
And a half-hope sprang gladdening his faint Soul,
As rank on rank the sacramental host
Of God's Elect, poured their linked files upon
The armies of the Alien. Forth with them
He marched, to windings of their Spartan flute,
Filled with the visions of heroic deeds,
Though not of hope, yet born of pure desire.
If Virtue yet survive the wrecks of Time,
If Truth and Love be no grand mockery,
Nor the great world a bubbling vat of Hell,
Haply some glimmer of its better soul
Will greet him there, and there even yet may be
Some heart of all those Chosen, who might fill
The infinite thirst and hunger of his own.
Small need he saw, where first he scanned the field
Of his last hope, for alien armies there;

That host itself went surging in the whirls
Of civil conflict, with more mad turmoil
Than shook the heavens, when wildest rout disranked
The innumerous foe. Not his the clear-eyed soul
To pierce that loud contending whirlpool down
To the calm center of a swerveless aim,—
The potent God's-will, blending in one tide
Of boundless good, its torn and warring waves;—
The storm was there, but where was the blue sky?

The grim Doubt grew into a very fiend,
And laughing, leapt upon his cheated heart,
Coiled its bat-wings and clung there, black as hell,
And heavy as a nightmare. What could he?
Poor Donaldane, a brother brotherless,
With an Ideal too divine for earth;
Nigh stripped of faith in all he would have loved!

Yet there was One amid that dinning moil,
Whose deep, calm eye, with glances of clear hope
And love-sad pity, smote the shrivelled fiend
Who clutched his heart so fiercely. In her face
Was quiet beauty, and a soul of Good;
Her voice was music, and a holy light
Of faithful thought shone in her words sincere,—
Light, driving back the strong Doubt from his breast,

If yet it might not open into bloom
The trodden rose-buds of a perfect Trust.

Lillian (fit name for one whose smallest deeds
Made her life musical,) henceforth became
The one sweet tone, in all that stormy war,
To the sick soul of Donaldane; in him
She stirred new pulses of new joy, unfelt
Till then, and, with a touch that she knew not,
Struck from the silence of his jangled heart
Divinest melody, in the silver chimes
Of generous thoughts, and the sweet will, that born
Of pure affection, showers its kindnesses
On all; for that soft tone of world-wide love,
And the rich music of her gentle voice,
Laden with earnest goodness, went with him—
The joy melodious of his silent way.

Out of his soul she might not lightly pass,
For she had come—as comes the welcome beam
Of morning to the dreamer, when wild shapes
Have marred some olden Beauty—with a light
Rekindling the fair forms of primal love,
Ideals perished in the long ago.
Amid the tumult of the turbulent crowd,
When the whole heart recoiled with aching grief
At what he saw, her spirit brought again
Those buried visions of diviner things,

And holier Being, that had peopled oft
His boyhood's solitude, ere yet he knew
That there were smiles of guilt and treachery.

Her voice was as the song of summer birds
In the storm's roaring, her serene glance lit
The smothered torch of his white love again,
Not now to waste with buried fire his heart,
But a pure flame above the hallowed shrine
Of this, his new Divinity. A glance,
A word, brought back with one electric flash
Into the *Man*, the buried glory-beams
That lit the *Boy*.

To him whose secret soul
Hath never dreamed of those diviner forms
Which people the bright realms of Thought, or sighed
For the pure incarnation of his dream,
Love hath no language to reveal her deep
Mysterious presence, or the workings of
Her prevalent spirit; but to one like him —
Whose heart from childhood bore an aimless fire,
While on the clear deeps of his gentle soul,
In hours of calm, were mirrored the serene
And lovely forms, that hover over us,
Informing us with beauty — there but needs
One glance, when eye to eye lends fire, to bear
Her holiest revelation.

He beheld,

In her soft eye, and fair heart-speaking face,
Some gleams of the enshrined beatitudes,
Whose light once made his path a galaxy:
And now, for that he feared his own scarred heart,
Even as one of those Impalpable
She moved before him, and became to him
A holy vision, a sweet, waking dream,
Which, if he did but utter one poor word,
Would fade away for ever. Sanctity
Serene encircled her, through whose light wreaths
He would not pierce, with earthly speech like his;
And though his heart was full of whitest love,
He gave his tongue no counsel, but did choose
Rather to worship in dumb reverence,
Than mar the shrine by rudely grasping it.
What if she were not all that he believed;
What if the mist-like halo of divine
And placid spirit-beauty, were but cast
From his own deep unconscious Soul? it fell
On a pure mirror, dimmed by no foul breath,
Or he had never seen it; was it fit
That he should pluck the sweet delusion off,
If it were thus, since in that fair reflex
His whole heart opened flower-like, day by day?
Nay, if the beam were his, 'twas only thus
It could be Life and Beauty to his soul.

But *she was holy*, and the atmosphere
Was tinged with heavenly radiance from *within*,
Making surrounding earth-clouds beautiful.
The commonest things put on a hue of heaven,
In her divine heart's presence, and the rude
Brown earth bloomed sweetly, under the warm light
Of her pure sun-like spirit. Round her path
Wood, rock, and stream, reflected loveliness,
As when the morning kisses the green earth.
Even the brown mill, wherein her busy hand
Waged war on Chaos, Hunger, and grim Want,
(For she had been no pampered child of wealth,
But struck with toil the iron chords of life,)
Did rather seem a temple with meet songs
And orisons, than the hard prison it was;
For a true heart had sent a living pulse
Through its steel nerves; a pure and holy Soul
Wrought worship in its blind Activities.

Donald forgot his darkness in her light,
His Winter smiled, and blossomed, in her Spring;
So deep a melody her silent heart
Infused into his spirit and his life,
All things grew musical; the jangling notes
Of outward Discord, could not reach his ear,
It was so filled with inborn harmony.
He sought not if the world was dark beyond

His orb of light, or if his own must wane;
Whether the weltering chaos girdled in
A hand-breadth round him, or a universe;
In the loud Maelstrom of the boiling world
His ear had caught the softest under-tone
Of Love and Life, that held him so entranced,
All the mad whirlpool thundered on unheard.

Even as the unconscious wind, whose breathing wakes
Eolian murmurs from its trembling harp,
She moved, the soul of melody in him;
And never knew the wealth of life she gave.
He told her not; she could not need his love,
And he was blest too deeply to profane,
With beggar'd words, his great and silent awe.

Yet he inscribed it on the hueless air
Of the lone wood, by leaf, and vine, and flower,
Even with the eye that read the tale in these,
For all were eloquent of silent Love:
And he revealed it to the midnight stars,
The rude old Constellations melted back,
As ere primeval wonders found in them
Lion and Centaur, and the myriad shapes
Of antique Poesy—and to him henceforth,
In thousand-fold bright figures, they did spell
Life, Love, and the sweet name of Lillian:

And on the green earth, travel-sore his feet
Left records of the love he would not speak;
For long lone hours he tracked the flying sun,
Towards its home and hers, that he might be
In her calm presence even for a day,
To feed the hunger of his silent thought.

Alas! he had not learned that deeper love
Which is an omnipresence, for it was
His heart's first lesson; and how far his glance
Might have pierced into it, had not the page
Been torn too sudden from his Book of Life,
That shivered heart tells but a mournful guess!

One day young Lillian wandered to the hills,
That girt with green the valley of her home;
Her pure soul full of beauty and of prayer,
There, from the din of busy life retired,
To pierce through Being's garment of unrest
To the calm beating of its Sabbath Heart.
Sunset and Autumn filled the sky and earth
With rival splendors, as if all the Day's
And the Year's gorgeousness, were harvested
And garnered in the west. The dying leaves
Wore the rich blushes of their infant Spring,
Like childhood's memories in the old man's soul.
All glories mingled in the exodus

Of Day and Autumn, splendors from the deep
Shot through the trembling curtain, as they passed
Into the mighty Death-realm. Lillian
Sat on a moss-bed soft and delicate,
A very Eden for the fairy folk,
And thence looked forth on meadow, wood, and sky,
In their last hues of green, red, blue, and grey,
With intricate blendings of soft light and shade,
An endless maze of glories, many-dyed,
In wild entanglement,—as if the hand
Of Beauty's Angel had unrolled her woof,
And flung the coiled mesh down the sky to earth,
In agony of infinite satelessness.
She saw, but this not only; for as one
Looks on his window and sees far beyond,
Her eye beheld that visible, yet pierced
To the full depths of splendor, of whose waves
That was a sun-lit spray-wreath, dashing up
Round the gray rocks of Time. Eternity
Lay under all, these, and the earth, the heavens,
And the great Universe. Yon very sky,—
Where now the Angels sow, with unseen hands
O'er all the bare champaign of gathered Day,
Star-germs whose blooms will be a new Day's-light,—
Shall shed its worlds, like flying leaves, to feed
With their decay another Universe.
All things are transient save the Eternal One.

Her clear eye glimpsing down the Infinite
Saw there, with faint half-vision, as in dream,
Glories, and Mysteries, and Beatitudes,
Flitting auroral; Splendors for which earth
Has not a name in all her myriad tongues,
For they were of the Life and Soul of Things;
Born of the inmost Verity of All;
Seen only by the holy. Marvelled she
How thin a veil had hid their lovely forms,
Wholly transparent to the annointed eye,
A crystal pall before the pure of heart,
Yet pierced by no glance of the sensual.
That veil is woven in the loom of Life,
And every man fills up the delicate warp
Between himself and those bright Verities,
With woof of his own Being, gross or clear.
Close by the heart of the Serene and Pure
Their warm hearts beat, and lend it holy strength;
But to the breast thick bound in earthliness,
No spirit-pulse-beat sends its lifeful thrill.

O then, saw Lillian whence and why had come
Those vague ineffable yearnings of the soul
As for some old "remembered home," when stirred
By low-voiced melodies of heart or tongue,
Heroic Love-Deeds, Beauty, or the hush
Of speechless Adoration. Such things shook

The earth-dust from her spirit, and half revealed
Those pure Eternities, till oft her own,
Unknowing then, had felt the wave-like swell
Of their white bosoms, as they bore her up
On those soft billows resting, into some
Diviner sense of Beauty and of Life.
And oft-times through that melting veil she saw
Their glorious forms in full dim outline, stand
Maddeningly beautiful, like the airy limbs
Of Wood-Nymph, when the dallying wind's caress
Wreathes round them her own skirts of gossamer.
Down-looking thus, through earth's clear crystalline—
Clear only to the Trustful—Lillian
Fed full her Soul on holy Mysteries,
And bowed her low in worship of the Deep.
So sat she, spirit-like, above the world,
Till the bright gold grew crimson in the west,
And the wood-glories dim'd. Then came a sense
Of body's weakness, blending with the strength
Of that Soul-gladness, and one whispered prayer
Hung on her moving lip, "O Soul of souls,
Father of Life and Death, if it may be
That I have done my little here on earth,
Let me glide hence into the deeps I see,
And be a Soul forever!" For in sooth
She had grown weary in the faithful strife,
Wrestling with Error, and grim-visaged Want.

Slowly descending from the fading cloud,
A Being, beautiful beyond all thought,
Came o'er the wood; a star was on her brow,
And in her hand a coronal of flowers;
Majestic as the heavens her port, her glance
Soft as the moonbeam's pearl, thrice crystalized;
She was so pure, and beautiful, she seemed
The incarnation of a Seraph's *love*,
And an Arch-Angel's *glory;* one fair hand
Waved gracefully to the Watcher, one in air
Held the bright crown, as thrice her musical voice
Entranced the earth, "Come Lillian, sister come!
Come when the leaves fall, we are waiting thee."
She said, and passed away, as passed the hues
From the rich veil of sunset. Lillian pry'd
Into the fading west till all was dark;
And as the vision melted from the sky,
Bright eyes and floating tresses, and the curls
Round many a fair face, half-concealed and dim,
And scarce distinguished from the clouds, she saw
For a brief space; as if an Angel host
Swept out beyond the opening gates of heaven,
Wheeled, and were lost again. Then came a gush
Of most transcendent melody, O how sweet!
Mad'ning her soul with extasy of bliss.

That sound, the faintest mortal ever heard,
Died not upon her ear; those airy shapes,

The dimmest mortal ever saw, went not;
But they were with her alway, heard and seen,
Though busy crowds went jostling in her path,
And the dull iron heart-beat of the Mill—
Brown fiend of Toil—still vexed the ear of Day
With horrid monotone. Unheard, unseen
They moved, for now her spirit dwelt apart
Among the Angels.

A few days, and then
The halls of Labor heard her step no more.
On the white pillow rested her white cheek,
And her pale hand did mock the snowy sheet,
No more to wrestle with the powers of Ill.
Day after day with intense joy she watched
The dull brown mark of dissolution, creep
Over the gorgeous woodlands; with like swift
And sure advance, Disease clipped, thread by thread,
The ties which bound her Spirit to its clay,
That, when the blast should drive the first grey shower
Of withered leaves, her life might pass with it.
As hue by hue the Autumn glories dimmed
And perished, gleam on gleam the bright Death-world
Unfolded to her Soul, unspeakable
And full of heaven, a universe of Thought.
O tell me not that wild Delirium wrought
Those glorious forms, majestical, which filled

That world of splendor and of mystery;
Or poured from urns of living pearl and gold,
O'erhung with wreaths of deathless Amaranth,
Those pure translucent waters, dancing down
O'er smoothest pebbles, and round flowering banks
Of such ineffable beauty, that the seer
Could only weep in dumb calm extasy:
Say not that discord of the brain could wake
Those tones, which made the air one breathing Soul
Of overwhelming melody to her,
With songs of birds and spirit-voices blent;
Could paint those Angel eyes, whose glances deep,
Through loops in woven myrtle bowers shot forth,
Revealed a whole Eternity of Love.
O say it not, fond watchers by her couch;
For then were madness the sole Beautiful,
All else a heaviness of eye and heart.

Poor Lillian! strove she with half-uttered words,
On tremulous white lips, to articulate
The Great Unspeakable; shook her slender frame,
As shakes the cloud with thunder, at the flash
Of that all-glorious Apocalypse.
Ah! poor dumb Lillian! her broken speech
Was born of earth; her vision, of the Heavens!
And she did weep in bitterness of soul
To see the loved turn from her, with a look

Of pitying distrust, by which she knew
They deemed her mad. O utter agony!
Will they not see; is there no spirit there
To join that shivered mirror, and unite
Her broken image of the great Unknown?
Ah none; and that poor heart went hushed and dumb
With infinite splendor, crowned with infinite grief.
Peace to thee, Lillian, now thy soul hath rest,
In the great Silence of Eternity!

No peace to Donaldane, though far away
From where kind hands had veiled the broken shrine
Of his heart's idol, where no cruel winds
Had blown the tale of ruin, how the Ark
Of his Love's worship, earthward sunk, despoiled
Of its Shekinah: yet a twilight gloom
Hung over him, as from the shadowy wing
Of Death, stretched broad above, it had come down.
There went the murmur of a solemn dirge
Through his unconscious soul, by night and day,
Blent with the soft sweet name of Lillian.
Something was written in the silent stars,
The summer flowers, the green earth, and the brooks,
That tinged his hours with quiet mournfulness.
All tones that trembled in the hushed air, seemed
The low faint prelude to a requiem;
But not a thought received the whispered hint,
Or dreamed the hovering sorrow was for him.

But the unborn fulfillment could not wait
Till its dim signs were read aright; it came,
A sudden gloom launched forth, as if at once
Lightning were changed to blackness, and shot down
Across his path. His hope, the gasping year,
Peace, Love, and Lillian, died in one short breath,
Even with the word which told him of his grief.
And a new year came in with that new wo,
Its only boon for wretched Donaldane.
He was not born to conquer in defeat,
Nor trained to triumph in his great despair.
Though he had dwelt among the beautiful
And glorious things of Earth, lived in the life
Of bird and flower, of grasses and green leaves;
And bowed to grandeur with a wordless awe;
Yet he had never pierced the rind of things
After their deepest mystery, to the core
And central secret, where mutation lies
On the rock-basis of the Immutable.
They passed him by, a pageant of bright forms,
Gay maskers full of momentary life,
Pushed from the stage by each succeeding troop;
Their mission ended with the forms they bore.
From their fair visors looked on him no eye
Lit at the soul of the Eternal Seer:
They went and were no more, and he must find
Some new-born fairness where to feed his soul.

The infinite under-Life, that bubbles up
Into those wells of Being, tree and man,
Star, and the worlds, he had not dived to that;
So that his soul had now no resting place.
Lillian had gone into the utter Dark,
She who was all the incarnate perfectness
Of his most pure Ideal; and to seek
Another shrine for his dethroned and stript
Divinity, for this he had no heart.
Where, 'mid the thousands whom he trusted not,
For the repulses of the few, could he,
If yet he dared to seek, have found her peer?
What if there glided past him many souls
Almost as holy and divine as hers,
Nay *all* as holy and divine as hers;
They were but specters glimmering through the Dark,
Vexing the midnight of his buried Trust.

Alas! what boots it now to walk with men,
When men are gibbering demons that do grin
With fell delight upon his agonies!—
For so he deemed the careless smiles of them
He met;—and wherefore should he not escape
Such cold and heartless mockery of wo?
Did they not see that he was desolate,
A scathed and sapless trunk, fire-scorched and black
With lightning-paths, and yet to leer and mow

Upon him! O! forlorn, poor heart,
Such visions mark the darkness of despair;
Such wild notes ring from shattered lyres alone.

The world itself expired when Lillian died,
And there were left but death, and deadly things,
And many legions of unquiet ghosts,
Troubling the lampless charnel; so he went
A hopeless wanderer, to the gloomy woods,
To be alone with his great solitude.
There he aroused old echoes from their sleep,
Calling the elements, and all deep powers,
To render back the spirit of his Love.

"O! I am a wretched man,
Poor of heart and very sore;
I have lost my Lillian,
I can lose no more.
Heavens! have ye heard of her?
Wanders she there,
Where your bright armies are?
Render some word of her!

"Pity me, a lonely man;
Ye are many, Stars of night,
Then give back my Lillian
With her golden light.

I have sore need of her;
Stars she was fair
As your loveliest are;
Took ye no heed of her?

"Darkness! thou primeval ban,
Older than the solid globe,
Hast thou hid my Lillian
In thy gloomy robe?
Waves of thy river once
Poured o'er her soul,
I'll rush where they roll
For her deliverance!

"Morning! on the mountain top,
Envious of her lovelier blush,
Hast thou drunk her being up,
With its sunny gush?
Pent in alembics, I'll
All thy rays burn,
Till her spirit return
From its condemned exile.

"Colorless and breathing Air,—
Liquid marble, sky-embrac'd—
Is my Lillian floating there
In thy desert waste?
Roaming all lands over,
Where thy streams flow,

Night and day will I go,
But for one glance of her.

"Hungry, all-devouring Sea!
Rumbling in thy coral caves,
Tell! O tell me where is she
Whom my spirit craves?
Is't her control hushes
Now, thy great deep?
Ah! no more will ye sleep,
When there my soul rushes!

"Deathless, lifeless, void Inane!
Utter hollow Nothingness!
Sunk she in thy black domain
O! thou beingless?
Then must I violate
Even thy reign,
To restore her again,
Or be annihilate!"

In vain he questioned Darkness and the Stars,
Ocean and Air, and the unbreathing blank
Of utter Nothing; from his hollow heart
Came the lone answer, "*Lillian is dead!*"
At last his boiling thought grew rudderless,
Dashing from rock to rock of agony,
Yet ever true to the one haven of wo.

A mad, wild sympathy with outward things
Lay in him, and he was a rock, a tree,
Night and the heavens, and every thing by turns
That met his eye or whirling phantasy;
And ever his delirious thoughts revolved
Round one devouring center, like the rush
Of downward waves in the Corbrechton's whirl;
Now startling silence with a wilder song.

"She has gone, gone, gone!
I am Night, and the Demon King
Has plucked out all my stars;
See! these eye-holes are the scars,
And the moon filled this black ring;
I am Night with never a dawn,
She is gone, gone, gone!

"For the Dead my bareness grieves.
I am a forest the winds have whipt,
And left me not a leaf;
Winter was the hoary thief
By whom all my boughs were stript;
Winds whirl my beautiful leaves,
For the dead my bareness grieves.

"O me! the day is black!
I am Day and the sun is dead,
Dead, and darker than pitch!
Now discover which is which;

Day and Night have met and wed,
And the sun will never come back:
O me! the day is black!

"Earth will ne'er see more of wet,
I am a cloud that cannot rain;
The Frost has locked me up,
Here my lightning-bolts must stop;
Racking me with inward pain;
Clouds rack, and winds fret,
Earth will ne'er see more of wet.

"O! my brain, my burning brain!
Only by me the world is man'd,
And feels my brain a grip
Out of which it cannot slip,
'Tis a Demon's red-hot hand!
The world reels into wreck again,
O! my brain, my burning brain!"

Aye, could it rain, could that all-torturing wo
Burst forth in tears, there yet were left some hope
That light and greenness would return, to bless
Thy night of barrenness, poor Donaldane;
But stars, the sun, the rain, and the green leaves
Came not; and the hot brain poured wilder still
Its boiling vortex of mad phantasies,-

And inextinguishable thoughts, that down
To their fixed center of eternal black
Rolled headlong, bounding with impetuous whirl.

One day, when the wild tumult seemed to sleep,
He went once more to the forsaken home
Of his loved Lillian, to find perhaps
Some sad joy in the things which she had seen,
The spot where she had lived, and loved, and toiled,
Feared, hoped and died. But inward waste found there
Fit symbol in the outward; the old mill,
Where her hands grappled the gaunt Hunger-fiend,
Was gone to dust; the fire had trodden it,
With red foot, into ashes. Two black beams
Bending to ruin, held the tottering weight
Of a huge wheel, one time the iron heart
Whence all those hushed Activities drew life;
So scorched and black lay all his buried hopes,
So, with shrunk arms, the memory of the Past
Sustained the unmoving cold heart of his Love,
In thoughts, fire-stricken, of his Lillian.

Turn away, mourner! for that hot brain spins
And whirls again to madness; fly the Dark,
Or it shall close thee in for ever—fly!
But he might never fly the utter night
Which was within him. He forgot all thought
Of why he came into that blackened place,

And only wondered it was not more black.
Then he dragged on his shrivel'd heart again;
And wandered far away from his old home,
In loneliest places, amid caves, and fens
Thick studded with dark shrubs, or where huge rocks
Hung toppling, and strange echoes loved to dwell.

There was one spot amid the Northern hills
He loved, if it be love that weds the soul,
Night-struck, to kindred horrors. Far around
Was stretched the base of a broad pyramid,
Rock piled on rock confused and tumbled down
In huge disorder, as if there were once
The magazine of some Heaven-warring brood
Titan's or Fiend's; and through the clefts, between
The rough round rocks, a forest of huge trees
Had forced its way into the earth and heavens,
Once hiding the brown hill with lovely green;
But now the fire had scathed its ancient trunks,
And they stood tall and black, beneath the moon,
With stout bare arms stretched threatening to the sky,
As if the grim old giants flung again
Defiance to the Highest. Some lay prone
From rock to rock, or trunk on trunk, thick fallen,
As smit down by the Thunderer, like the field,—
War's harvest or the husbandman's—where toil
Or sword had cloven down a People's hope.

There the bald eagle screamed, as he soared up
In wide gyrations for his Northern flight.
The fire-eyes of the wild-cat glared between
The jutting rocks, and the brown rattlesnake
Shook his shrill signal; over them the owl
Made the night quiver with his dismal hoot.
Close round the mountain-base a narrow swamp
Lay dank and chilly, where, as o'er a grave,
The ghost-shapes crept in cerements of white fog,
Out of whose breast the frog-song's dolorous pitch
Rose dismally. Across this Acheron
Swelled up a ferny knoll uncultivate
Save by the sexton's spade; it was a place
Of human graves, for, even there, in some
Forgotten day, men lived, and loved, and died.
Over the graves a few half-trunks stood up
Blackened and bare, Fiend-watchers waiting, grim
And terrible, for the waking of the dead.
Round them in darkest midnight, travelers lost
Had seen strange fire-balls quiver, and go out
In myriad blue sparkles, and come back,
Ere their arched hairs were laid, more dreadful still;
While hoarse, unearthly cries, and watery shapes
Filled the deep valley. Wondering fear had made
That spot as terrible as desolate.

There the lone Maniac sought his noon-day lair
Under a beetling crag, and fed upon

The roots and cresses of the valley. There
Trampled the midnight rocks with wandering feet,
And fed his soul on horrors; gladdened most
When storm and rattling thunder rolled above,
And lightning-gleams ran down the splintering trunks,
Licking the moss'd rocks with blue tongues of fire.

The great North winds went howling through the vale,
And the old tree-trunks creaked, and groaned, and tossed
Their rived arms round, as in dumb agony.
The Maniac's eye saw, in their dim great forms
Writhing in midnight tempest, the wild dance
Of giant skeletons. In such an hour
His soul rejoiced, as with a joy of hell,
In hosted terrors. Standing on the rocks,
While meteors quivered o'er the marsh, and winds
Were up among the tree-tops, he would shout
In broken song his mad and horrible glee.

THE SKELETON DANCE.

"Hurrah, hurrah, ha! ha! ha! ha!
Who goes to the dance to-night,
The great dance of the skeletons,
The dead Earth's old and mighty ones,
Stalwart kings of terrible height,
Og of Bashan, and all his sons,

Goliath of Gath, and the Anakims,
Titans huge with skinny limbs;
Giants taller than Cormoran,
Who can clasp the full moon at a span!

"See, they come! their hall is there,
On the rock-hill high and bare,
A goblin leads them in, with his lamp,
Whose wicks are fed with the oil of the dead,
And lit at the fungus of the swamp.
Hark ye, hear their hollow tramp;
Bony shanks and grisly locks
Waving and rattling over the rocks;
Patter, patter, patter! now how their feet clatter,
As they come all fresh from their graves;
Sweet, grinning and chapless braves,
Dewy and green with the sepulchre's damp!

"Blow aloud Piper, blow, blow!
Now it is time the dance began,
Split your pipes old Borean,
Up and at it, oho! oho!
Lead off yonder a half a million,
Down and up in a gay cotillion:
Not so high, you've split the sky!
Don't you see how the fires fly?
'Bo-ho-oh-hoo-o! bo-whoo-oh!'
Blow aloud Piper! blow, blow,
Ha, ha, ha! Cormoran's head beat out a star.

"Come Typhéus, thunder-scarred,
Rise in Etna's sulphur-vomit,
Fly to the dancers like a comet;
Never thy frightful wounds regard;
Ha, he comes with heads to spare,
A hundred dragon heads in air;
His every leap is a hundred rods,
And every head with his leaping nods;
Well done, terror of the Gods!
'Ba-a-a-a' hurrah, hurrah!
Jupiter thinks it best to go;
He sees below, his old foe,
Wheeling and reeling to and fro:
'Caw, caw, caw!' ha! ha! ha!
No longer Apollo his harp will follow,
He has taken to *singing* 'caw! caw! caw!"
Juno lows, Diana mews,
Ha, how the witch-cat flies!
Do you see the sparks of her eyes?
The coward Gods the brutes abuse.
Ha! that bolt from the riven skies!
Shivered and low Typhéus lies,
Despoiled in bones and thews.

"Mimas aching from the thunder,
Shake again your nerves of iron;
Enceladus 'scaped from under
Etna, trip with Porphyrion,

And twisting them up to and fro,
Take the gnarled trees as you go.

"Shaking high his hundred hands
Rattling bony in the air,
There the huge Briareus stands,
Wha! what was that sudden glare?
His eyes have dropped out of their holes!
And see they glow like burning coals,
Just under the rock's edge there!
'Bo-ho-oo—Whoo-o-o.' I wonder
If Jupiter's cart has *dumped* its thunder.

"Where's your Patagonian maid
Will waltz with a man without a head?—
Great Goliath standing there;—
See, his arms are in the air,
And his bones shake in their sockets
Every time his foot the rock hits.
Ho! make way for her, there is she,
How green and lanky her limbs be.
Hold your light up lantern-devil:
Here's the place to see the revel.
Whirl, whirl, whirl;
Headless giant,
Keep your eye on 't,
Lo he leaps with the lanky girl.

"Crash, tumble, rumble, rumble,
Crash, flash, and another crash!—
Ho, that Titan's head is humble;
I saw it split on the rocks,
In a shower of white scalp-locks;
His head is gone, and he dances on;
And the grave-dust flies;—
If they had eyes
'Twere sad work for them there,
In such a horrid air.

"Skinny fragments fall like rain;
Arm and shoulder, rib and head,
Rattle down, as on amain
All the dead, with measured tread,
Leap at what the Piper played.
O-o-o-o! Piper blow!
Encelâdus now has played us
Tricks of the olden time again.
Piper, pipe it louder yet,
For a wedding day is set,
A wedding of bones, and a feast of bones,
And a sweet symphony of groans!
Oh-ho-oh! Louder blow.
On this rock I lay my head;
Death and I to-night must wed.
What a blow! Oh, ho, oh!

Demogorgon from the sky
Flung the socket of his thigh;
Come, and see the blood, Grim!
Fill your skull up to the brim,
Drink it off and take a bout,
And we'll wed when the dance is out!

"O horror! horror! horror!
This was the grave of all my sorrow;
And one I knew was buried there,
Under this bosom so red and bare:
I see! I see! I see! 'Tis she!
Ha! ha! ha! Oh, oh, ho! ah!"

A shivered bough had gored him in its fall,
And the quick lightning showed the spouting blood
On the grey rock, an instant, and was gone.
Phosphoric sparks, from many a trunk's decay,
Showered down like snow, as the torn limbs struck off
The wasting circles that had chronicled
The slow flight of the Ages.

Long he lay
In pain and hunger, till a passer by,
Drawn by his feeble moanings to the spot,
Took up the wasted form and bore it on
To the kind shelter of his cottage roof;
A poor man's humble home. There tenderly

As he would nourish his own father's son,
He nursed the wounded man; aye, took the bread
From his own lips to satisfy his want.
His trembling younkers, while they shook to see
Those wild eyes staring on them, would divide
Their scanty meal with him, and then thank God
That he had brought the poor man to their roof,
That they might know the blessedness there is
In heartfelt charity. Such kindly deeds
Make earth more beautiful, and sow the germs
Of larger faith in the wide Human Heart.
More holy seem they in the Poor Man's cot,
For there 'tis sweeter virtue to be kind.
Happy the poor who can be generous,
And who may see in their blithe little ones
A human Heart, expanding their young breasts,
And opening to the needy their small hands
With some meet charity,—for *they are blessed.*

Dwelt Donald peaceful in the cotter's hut,
Till strength and wholeness came to him again,
Then in the stillness of the night he fled,
Leaving his helpers to awake and wonder.
But what availed their wonder, or their search?
Far from their cot the foot of Donaldane
Tracked the lone shore, by midnight, to and fro,
Wet by the Atlantic wave; and in his ear,
The great voice of the ever sounding deep

Rang like the death dirge of the Universe.
Away, away from that eternal dirge
He'd fled, and ever as he fled it rang
Through his void heart, "*The universe is dead!*"
He plunged into the waters, but the waves
Cried "*dead,*" and flung him back. In the blank air
Low voices whispered hoarsely, "*dead, dead, dead!*"
He climbed a tall rock which hung o'er the sea,
To whose peaked height no wave could hurl him back;
Far down below went moaning the wild dirge,
And forms were on the billows beckoning him.
But ha! was that a spectre, too, who sank
In the bare rock close down by where he stood?
He recked not, for that instant a quick flash
Shot through his brain, and over all the world,
And struck the universe and all things dead;
Only he seemed to live. He saw the sun
Rot out of the pale sky, and grain by grain
Drop down into the void abyss below;
The moon waned ray by ray, till all was gone;
The stars ran lawless in the lawless heavens,
And smote each other, orb on orb fierce-hurled
With mutual ruin, till the stars were lost,
And left the heavens a universal blank.
The earth decayed and crumbled into nought,
And inch by inch the ruin crept upon
The cliff whereon he stood. Died heat and cold;

Darkness and light; and the invisible air,
Save where he hung, evanished and was not.
Little by little crumbled down the cliff,
And like a sand-hill sank beneath his feet.
He watched the dwindling atoms as they fell,
Till they were lost in utter nothingness.
Stooping to pry into that nether Blank,
A fragment of the chalky rock went down,
Leaving weak foothold on the lessened peak;
He followed with keen glance the falling mass,
Yet clinging with strange terror to the firm,
And, as the last point vanished on its track,
As melting, fading it went whirling on—
Dim rising like a vapor, from the deep,
He saw—ah yes! it was his Lillian;
Distinct one moment, and her pale form grew
Fainter and fainter in the hollow deep;
An infinite sadness shone in her white face,
And seemed it tears were in her melting eyes.
"Stay! stay!" shrieked Donald, "Lillian! Lillian!
What means this ruin? stay, my love! O stay,
And I will come to thee!" Came faintly back
A musical voice, as vanished the last glimpse
Of her fair form, "THE UNIVERSE IS DEAD!"
Off from the rock, that shivered at his leap,
He plunged into the void and utter Blank,
Whirling in breathless horror, down, down, down,

Ten thousand thousand fathoms hurled below;
Right on, and on, and on, with nought of life,
Fluid or solid round, whereby to count
The long dark ages of his awful flight.
Swifter and swifter down with lightning speed
Through infinite blankness, dumb and terrible,
He whirled away whole Eons, Cycles vast,
By fire-leaps numbered of his burning heart,
Whose molten lead drove down with gathering force
His whirling form, sheer through the immense profound;
Deep below deep, abyss beneath abyss,
Boundless on boundless stretching; down and down
With swift redoubling speed, beyond the flight
Of never-flagging and all-piercing thought;
Falling and falling, and each nether deep
The height from which to plunge into the void,
Ten thousand times his utmost reach, below,
Into the soundless, everlasting Down!
Of infinite being, only he was left,
A flying atom in a boundless blank;
And this his wild down rushing, the one force
Left of the countless potencies. "O now
For one firm rock whereon to dash this clay
Into impalpable atoms! But, alas!
The very rocks have perished. O my God!

Is this wild fall for ever? with no end,
No end, but just beginning when the last
Far stretch of Thought has spanned innumerous years?
But oh, no hope! for God himself is dead!
Chaos is dead, and I am all that is."
Such thought, an instant flashing o'er his brain,
Had measured, in his fall, ten thousand times
The space from earth to the remotest star,
Till in his seeming he had now become
Only a formless motion whirling on,—
When a dull plunge and momentary rush
Of waters over him, brought back the sense
Of Life, the Ocean, and the world, once more:
He had plunged down delirious from the rock,
Into the hungry deep. Another dash
In the white wave, a few brave swimmer-strokes
Beating the insatiate waters back, and then
A strong hand griped him by his lifted arm,
And held him forward to the dim shore-line;
Another hand smote fast the indignant waves,
That growled to see their prey plucked from their
jaws;
And mid rude buffetings and swelling rage
Manfully kept the wide-mouthed ruin back.
Treading the waters under him, like a Soul
Ploughing through overwhelming doubt to light,

Sped the bold swimmer to the solid land;
Now wholly plunged beneath the breaking wave,
And now high hung in the dim star-lit air;
Borne like the sea-bird on the backward rush
Of the recoiling billows, or sucked down
In some wild whirl which gurgles round the rocks
That gird the shore. O gallantly that hand
Shook death and terrors off, wreathed in the mane
Of the devouring monster, from whose throat
Its worthy mate drew forth the helpless prey;
And both nigh spent with straining toil bore up
The rescued Maniac to the solid shore.

Leaned on a rock they rested side by side,
The stranger and the madman, silently
Gazing by starlight into either face.
The sudden dash of chill waves over him
Half cooled in Donald's ever burning brain
The hot hand clenching it, for now his wild
Despairing look, was changed to boundless grief,
As he met calmly the inquiring glance
Of his Deliverer. But they spoke no word;
The stranger asked not of his wretchedness,
Why with such desperation he had sought
To force the secrets of the Great Unknown;
Whether 'twere madness, or vain love, or both,

Made such rude knocking at the gate of death;
He asked not, for within his pitying glance,
And the warm drops that from his mild eye fell
On the poor Maniac's hand —no dripping brine
From the cold deep,—was haply something told
Of a tried heart, too well acquaint with tears
To rush profanely on another's wo,
And pry into that deepest sanctity,
The holy shrine of Sorrow. Silently
They gazed upon each other, silently
Rose, and together under the still stars
Went forward to a dim-seen cot, that stood
Just on the eastern horizon; for now
The cold wind of advancing Autumn searched
Their drenched limbs with too keen a scrutiny.
They roused the dwellers, and the dwellers stirred
The slumbering fire, whose quivering tongues licked up
The traveller's briny drench. And all that rude,
Great-hearted, rough-palmed kindness could perform,
Was offered gladly; for the dwellers there
Knew well such suffering; who full oft had seen
The struggling mariner bear bravely up,
When the great storm-waltz churned the troubled sea
Into a foam around his splintered bark;
And they had ever a stout hand to help,
An open heart to pity the distressed.

Worn with long watching, Donaldane sank down
In fitful sleep before the blazing fire,
Where they had spread for him a hasty couch;
And sleep that night on many a rougher bed
Showered sweeter dreams than could have pierced
the ring
Of that poor Maniac's fire-girdled brain.

Briefly the stranger, who had sometimes seen
Those hardy dwellers, as they plied their trade
On the great waters — faithful fishermen,—
Told as he might, what brought them in such hour
Such guests, unbidden, to their courtesy.
He had gone forth to muse upon the rocks;
Whether for love of the immortal stars,
The divine Darkness, and the moaning sea,
Or full of grief, he said not; there he sat
In long down-looking through the crystal earth,
Into its mystery, so held entranced
He marked not other watcher, till the foot
Of the intruder roused him, pressing close
To where he rested o'er some thunder-scar,
Or earthquake-track, ploughed in the cliff long since.
Lightly he dropped unheeded in the cleft,
While passed the intruder on and stood upright
On the rock's verge, so statue-like and firm,
He seemed as chiseled from the solid cliff.

"Why thus alone, close o'er the dizzy edge
Where the young eagle would have shrunk to rest,
He stood so fearlessly," the stranger said,
"I marvelled much, and twice or thrice half rose
To snatch him from the imminent peak, as some
Half-seeing guess of his intent spurred on;
But not a limb stirred, and it well might be
No ill thought led him; for I could not trace
What passion worked in his reverted face,
Madness, or grief, or poesy. But still
I watched him, busied with the inward thought
Of what might chance. Far o'er the jutting rock
He bent and spoke, I only heard the name
Of 'Lillian;'—'Hold rash man!'—but he marked not,
For as I leapt to snatch him from his fall,
Light as a bird he vaulted from the cliff,
Into the deep below. Force forwarding
Instinctive impulse, urged me headlong down
The same wild flight, by many an early feat
Of rash boy-daring made less terrible.
I saw his hand above the water stretched,
And round me the dark shore—a broken wall
Crushing the insurgent waters into sound,
Which heaven flung back in spray of sparkling light;
What toil to reach that shore it matters not,
Since here we are, delivered from the deep.
Yon restless sleeper, moaning in his dreams,

May prove some frantic lover smit with grief,
Whom cruel pangs have urged to desperate deeds.
Kindness will knit again his raveled heart,
And he will live to bless you, when the love
Of all repays him for the loss of one.
Be whom he may, or what the ill that draws
His death-ward glances may; be sure of this,
Kind deeds were never lost, and cannot be.
I go my way and ye will see me not;
Take this and help the needy." He flung down
His scanty purse, and if it were not much,
Those tears of Love, which quenched his manly eyes,
Were worth a thousand such, and yet 'twas *all*.
He stayed no words but left them wondering,
And the grey morning knew not where he fled.

Years rolled and Change kept its unchanging course.
Where now is the heart-shriveled maniac,
To whom the gyres of Time had been in red
Fire-cycles, wheeling through the heaven's black vault?
No more the hills are startled by his cry,
Or the swamp echoes with his horrible laugh;
Where now is that forlorn and wretched man?
He had gone back to his ancestral home,
Wild as the gale, yet harmless as the breeze,
And O for the sweet name of Christian Love,

And brotherly affection! he who found
In stranger-hearts the tender sympathy
He needed most, but knew not how to prize,
Was brotherless in his own home; though some
Who called his dead sire "Father," gathered there.
They cast him on the hard and legal stint
Of a Town's charity, whose loveless gifts
Are meted out with cold official care,
By grudging souls, who feed on the decay
Of starving mendicants,—keepers of the Poor,
Scanting the little they need least of all—
The coveted pittance of unsocial bread;—
Denying wholly what they most require,
The tender love which all men owe to all,
And most, to the infirm, forlorn, and poor.

Into such hands they gave their brotherless
And stricken brother, and thenceforward deemed
The perfect law of Charity fulfilled.
Three times a day, around their smoking board,
They thanked the Lord for his great bounty, given
To them unworthy, wholly vile and lean;
Three times a week, at sound of Sabbath-bell,
They went into the synagogues to pray,
And gave thank-offerings of *words* to God:
And twice a year paid meager tithes to feed
The Poor they spurned from all their bolted doosr;

But never gave kind word, or gentle look,
To feed the keener hunger of the heart.

Soul-buried Donald, what a home was thine!
Only one house so narrow, none so cold.
Half sunk in earth, and fashioned of bare stones
As if from their own bosoms rived, they built
A prison for the outcast, goaded on
By Fear and Mammon; there they thrust him in,
A crimeless victim, to that living grave
So close, that, burrowed in his broken straw,
His outstretched hand might rest on either wall.
Silent and savage, in his noisome den,
Grim as a wolf he sat, as day by day
Through the black bars, at morning's twilight hour,
They gave him food. A blanket torn and foul,
Garment and bed, half covered his gaunt form,
And it was stiff with winter's icy breath.
All night the hoar-frost gathered on the wall,
And scarce the day could melt it into dew,
The pent air hung around the horrid cell,
Heavy with torture, rank with lingering death,
And loathsome as the unbreathing sepulcher.
Once, long ago, he howled in agony,—
Smote the hard walls, and gnashed upon the bars,
When first he saw how dreadful was the doom
Which closed him in; but many, many moons.

Had fill'd above him since he was worn down
To a grim, silent hopelessness, a dumb
Pale image of insufferable wo.
A thousand times returning day revealed
That tomb's black maw to his unmoving eye,
A thousand times more welcome darkness drew
Its ebon curtain round his darker soul,
Till he had lost all thought of night or day,
Of cold or heat, and there was left alone
One dull unbounded sense of misery.

Were it not better that the narrower house—
Where never change can mock the heart with hope,
And there is left no room for wo to come—
Were now his resting place? It is not well
That such a den should keep a human form;
And who may break its iron bars but Death?
Death's mightier; Love! the one Omnipotent,
Nerving with strength the boundless heart of man.

There had gone up from many a gloomy lair
In the wide land,—where madness clanked its chain,
And eat the bread of bitterness—the cry
Of spirit's desolation, the wild laugh,
The maniac yell, the mumbled muttering,
And feeblest low whine of inanity,
Blending in one shrill piercing dissonance,—
The wild dirge of dethroned Divinities,—
Of Soul and Heart, driven crownless, and in chains

Of utter darkness, to lone wandering.
Pity had poured her tears upon the scars
And fetters of the Bondman, not in vain;
Had blessed the toil-worn laborer with her prayers,
Sought out the pale, despairing Magdalen,
Whom heartless 'virtue' spurned from human love,
And, with a thousand deeds of blessedness,
Won heaven for bosoms that did shelter her;
But long her ear caught not the moan of these
Out-cast so far, so lonely cooped, in dens
And iron cages, 'mid the louder din
Of tongued and congregated suffering.
But Love will quicken the dull sense, and find
An ear for every feeblest sound of want;
Sorrow shall not be buried down so deep,
But God, and the good hearts he dwelleth in,
Will hear its smothered voice, and bring relief.

The broken moans of crazed Humanity
Cast forth and wandering stark among the tombs
And crying fellowless from granite dens,
At last went thrilling through the great, warm heart
Of *one weak woman*, touching there the chords
Of infinite pity, whose low melody
Kindled her woman's-heart to heroic strength
And divine daring, as no bugle-blast
E'er fired the warrior's in the field of arms.
Despite the scorn of little souls wrapped up

In their huge seeming, the unmanly taunt
Of polished ruffians, or the coarser jeers
Of brutal Ignorance, like a ray from God
She shot clear day-light into darkened souls;
Melted Memnonian music from stone hearts,
And lit again the altars of old joy:
Or rather was she not the incarnate soul
Of primal harmony, binding up once more
The shivered chords of Life, in many a breast,
Tuning again the jangled hearts that wo
Had stricken into discord? A sweet Spring
To shivering birds whose song was frozen up;
A soft shower to the desert, in whose tears,
Glittering with new God's-promises, the scorched
And shriveled flowers, sprang fresh and beautiful,
With some sweet gleams of earlier loveliness.
Was she not sent from God to teach anew
The evangel of old prophets,—the supreme
Omnipotence of Love,—at whose meek voice
Loudest and dumbest demons are cast out;
And in whose sunny glance the earthliest soul
Puts on a hue of life's own verdantness?

From tomb to tomb she passed, where blind unlove
Had chained its wretched victims, and brought out
The dead and dark into the marvelous light
Of Life and Love. Servant of him who is

"The Resurrection and the Life," she called
The bound, soul-blind, and heart-dead, back from death,
Opened their wondering eyes, to see the chain
Struck off, and the black sepulcher left behind;
While earth once more became a verity.
For even to them, long barred in hopeless gloom,
To whom the great world had become a hell,
Or an unmeaning blank, there yet was left
Some beauty in the sunshine, and the trees;
Some music in the birds and water-falls;
Some joy in Love, some glimmer of live hope,
In the great fore-life of Eternity.

Donald sat crouching in his lonely cave,
With pale cheek leaned upon his fleshless hand,
Hollow with hunger, and disease, and wo,
His eye fixed on the earth with vacant stare.
Alas! why trouble him, that filthy mass
Of rags will be his shroud, this narrow pit
His grave ere long, what now has life for him?
Ah, say it not. If the expiring lamp
May blaze one instant brightly ere it die,—
If the parched summer may have one fresh shower,
And a short greenness, ere the winter come,—
If the dark Soul may catch one glimpse of heaven,
Ere it fly forth into the vast Unknown,—

Say not '*what boots it?*' God is shining there,
Making such life-from-death most beautiful.

Strong hands put back the rusted bolt which held
The prisoner's door, and the old hinges growled
To be thus shaken from their long repose;
And then a light step, and a silvery voice
Were heard in the poor Maniac's cell. Ah, me!
What should soft woman seek in such a spot?
Know ye not then this history of her heart,
Where man can *suffer* she can *minister?*
"Donald!" he moved not, and a gentle hand
Fell lightly on his shoulder. "Donaldane,
Come, Spring is waking up the flowers again,
And the young birds are glad; come forth and feel
The sunshine, and the soft wind." "Yes," he said,
"I know it, she is dead, and I am tired;
But I must watch to keep the worms away.
O she had beautiful eyes — a grave-worm came
And gnawed them hollow, one day, while I slept;
And now they're crawling to her lips!" His eyes
Just lifted, rested on his warden's form
Leaned by the door, and a half-savageness
Lit them a moment, as he fell again
Into grim silence. With one hand, waved back
That woman the stern warder, and in one
Took Donald's skeleton hand, and with a firm

But tender earnestness, and many words
Fit spoken, led him forth into the air,
On unresisting limbs that feebly bore
The weight of his shrunk body: once in fear
And weak defiance he looked back, but saw
No watcher, and then tottered feebly on
With his heroic Leader, and behind
Left his wolf-lair forever.

Many days
Went over his new home, before the light
Pierced down into his soul, yet more and more
His heart knew rest, and sometimes a half-joy
Shone in his dimmed eye. Summer came, and forth
Among the green shrubs, and the pleasant flowers,
He walked and sat, while every day there came
Some larger sense of freedom and of peace;
And more and more the music of kind hearts
Awoke in him a consciousness of love.
His step was feeble on the green-sward path,
For sure Consumption, with white hand, had come
To lead him home, so long a wanderer.
But while the wasting form consumed away,
The Spirit grew more gentle and serene,
With oft a trembling gleam of innocent joy.
Long as the Summer walked upon the hills
He sought the fields, with feeble step and slow,

Rested, or moved among their pleasant things,
Silent and smiling all the live-long day,
And not unblessed the quiet hours stole on.
He plucked the silken tassels of the corn,
And sported with them with a child's delight;
He watched the wild-flowers in their opening growth,
And, when the sun shrunk up their delicate leaves,
Brought water in his palm to nourish them;
He took the fire-fly from the cruel mesh
Of the black spider, and clapped hands for joy
To see the winged star mount into its heaven;
Piled nuts upon the jutty rocks, where chirped
The blithe red squirrel, for he said it was
His little brother; and one day he saw
The new moon, shriveled to a very thread,
Go down behind a rock, and he stole out
With a rich bowl of milk, and set it there
For his pale sister. Ah, poor heart of hearts;
'Twas shivered, but had kept its gentle love.

When Autumn came, and the cold winds were out,
He went no more into the open fields,
But Peace sat with him at the ingle-side.
He half remembered his old joy of heart,
And partly knew that there had been a cloud
Over his being; and sometimes he spoke
Of the new Life that waited for him, there
Up where the stars were, and the great moon went

When she came back out of her western grave.
He saw a coffin lowered into the earth,
And while they wept, who stood around, he said
He would not that when he had gone away
They should enclose him so, but he would have
His bosom bare to the fresh earth, and then
He would rise up, pure from the grosser clay,
A beautiful mist, and soar into the sky,
All full of sunshine and of happiness,
Floating aloft and feasting on the scent
Of blooming roses. Never more the moon
Should pine away for grief and loneliness,
For he would love her; and love all her stars,
And they should only weep henceforth for joy,
To light with dew the blooming stars of earth.

And so with fancies strange but beautiful
And tinged with colors of his earlier love,
He spent the hours, and ere the Autumn boughs
Were stripped of their bright hues, he closed his eyes;
And while a sweet smile curled his pallid lip,
He whispered "Lillian," and passed away,
Still as the falling leaf when not a breeze
Disturbs the splendor of the Autumn wood.

NOTE.—The description of the Maniac's cell is no fancy sketch, but a faithful picture of one seen by the writer, and from which that noble woman, and devoted philanthropist, DOROTHEA L. DIX, rescued a victim, as described in the poem.

THE LITTLE BOTANIST.

Not always written on the sky,
Or in the clouds of stormy weather
When blast and hurricane go by,
Bowing the forest tops together,
Or calmer, in the sunny glen,—
Or in the deeds of mighty men—
Brave heroes who have dared to die
For Truth, for Home, or Liberty,—
God's living oracles have been;
Nor grey-haired Bard, nor ancient Seer
Alone are sent to spread before
Our vision the immortal lore
And Life, that one day shall appear;
But O, to him who knows the worth
Of artless wisdom, undefiled
By the deceitful guiles of Earth,
How much of these is shadowed forth
Even in a Little Child.

Not far from where I dwelt a Boy,
A Boy dwells now, whose soul of joy

Awoke in me this thought;
And drew me, by his heart's sunshine,
In token of its light to mine,
To fashion this memorial line,
For joy within me wrought.
I have no gaudy tale to tell
Of what that simple child befell,
To captive idle ears, or make
The breathless heart of wonder quake;
But if within his Soul is aught
Of light, by this dim mirror caught,
Which in another's Soul may wake
One nobler impulse, for his sake
I speak, and am rewarded well.

I saw him by his Father's gate,
A ruddy boy of seven or eight,
Who at a glance might seem, in sooth,
Of manners artless and uncouth;
But there was something in the working
Of his deep brow, and eye, so fraught
With the light shade of passing Thought,
Which told what Soul within was lurking.

A merry lad he was that day,
Exulting in a new-found prize,
And by his side a lamb at play
Mimicked his sportive ecstasies

Fellow of both, in frolic glee
A petted dog ran sniffing there,
Coated with curls of soft brown hair
And breast as white as lilies are;
Right blithe companions were the three!

With joy the lamb leapt, and with joy
Leapt the glad dog, and leapt the Boy
With deeper joy, which could not wait
To find an utterance on his tongue,
As o'er the ditch, and through the gate,
Merry as he might be he sprung.
His features kindled with delight,
And 'neath a forehead high and bowed
His soft blue eyes were beaming bright,
Like sky-lakes 'neath a moonlit cloud.
His heart was full and running o'er
From laughing eye and curling lip,
As with the darling flowers he bore—
New flowers he had not seen before,—
He seemed in joyous fellowship:
And even amid his merriest dance
There beamed such pity in his glance,
That one could not refuse to bless
The Boy for his sweet tenderness.

Whether his Thoughts knew words or no,
I know not now; if haply so,

That laugh, and leap, and look of his,
Wedded to language which would tell
What they revealed to me so well,
Might flow into a song like this.

I.

"Ha, ha! Ye thought ye had hid in the rocks
Where the little marmots dwell,
Or crept away from the eye, and shocks
Of the storm, in the hedge, where the robber fox
Hath fashioned his cavern well.

II.

"But vain the thought, for ye well may know
I can catch the peep of your eyes;
And since the sun has drunk up the snow,
I've sought for ye high, and sought for ye low,
Till now ye are all my prize.

III.

"O beautiful flowers, had ye only sprung
Where I wander every day,
And here your buds and bells had swung
In the gentle breeze, when the day was young,
I would never have torn ye away.

IV.

"But you might long have filled the air
With scents, and a silver chime,

As the armëd Bee came humming there,
Repaying with music the sweets ye'd spare,
Through the sunny summer time.

V.

"I fear ye may wither and fade in the sun,
As his noon-day beams appear,
Yet then, as now, I will still love on,
And though ye wither away each one,
To me ye 'll be ever as dear.

VI.

"For you my heart, all over the hills
Went out, in my dreaming hours,
And where a fresh green betrayed the rills,
Where the Pee-weets dip their little bills,
It dwelt among the flowers.

VII.

"O the cool and joyous morning-time,
When the buds unlock their cells,
How sweet is 't then, o'er the hills to climb,
And hunt the plants in their dewy prime,
Where the spring from its moss-cup wells;

VIII.

"In glens where the earliest bird-notes rung,
Through the woody paths to tread,

Where the Spider's-web on the bush is hung,
With beads of gold and diamond strung
On every glittering thread.

IX.

"Bright flowers! ye are mine, though I know it's a grief
To your kind, that ye are gone;
But I've bound ye up in a delicate sheaf,
And kissed the dew from each velvet leaf,
So do not droop forlorn.

X.

"I'll bury your roots in a beautiful vase,
And water you every day,
Then will ye not look with a joyful face,
Whenever I come to your resting place,
My bonny flowers and gay?"

Then crowed the lad for very joy,
And leapt o'er stone-heap grey, and log:
The lamb ran frisking with the Boy,
Ran frisking with them both, the dog.

He was a Boy who well might be
His 'father's hope, his mother's pride,'
Though given oft to such rude glee,
Yet a most thoughtful lad was he,—

Even in his very infancy
Viewing with high Philosophy,
  Whatever might betide.
The heavy tomes of bard or sage,
That baffled oft maturer age,
He bent above with eager thirst,
And there his infant wonder nurst;
For with like ease he would devour
The hidden lore of book, or flower;
But chiefly 'twas his joy to be
  Amid the old and silent wood,
  Communing with its solitude,
    And making it sweet company:
And many a long and weary jaunt,
  With dog and lamb, the child would take;
No fear his simple heart to daunt,
  As, threading woodland path and brake,
He paused at every blooming plant
  To greet it for its beauty's sake.
No living thing would do him harm,
  He had a heart so full of love;
The snake would check his evil charm,
And round the hazel stems entwine
His lithe form, in a spiral line,—
  While on the ashen bough above,
  The hawk sat quiet as the dove;
For nought could do a cruel deed,

Which came within his gentle heed:
And every little bird which flew,
Would sing to him with right good will,
For well the merry warblers knew
The Boy had not a thought of ill.

His home was on the woodland marge,
Retired from Labor's busy din,
Fit place to make his bosom large,
By nursing of the heart within.
There soulless traffic had not thrust
Green Nature from her regal throne,
Torn from her breast the bosky zone,
And trod her children in the dust;
The birds had not been taught to know,
In every man, a wanton foe;
And though the nimble rabbit flew,
If, wandering, ye came in view,
You'd see him at a moment's turn
Nibbling his clover in the fern.
There trod the Boy untrodden ways,
Save where the kine went forth to graze,
Or silly sheep, in sinuous file,
Through pastures tracked their grassy aisle
Beside him, innocent as he,
Companions of his every mood,
The dog and lamb would ever be,
In sunny field, and shady wood.

I've seen him on a summer's day,
When all his fellows were at play,—
Or close immured in District School
To acquire stupidity by rule,—
Go out alone with thoughtful mien,
Far off beneath the leafy screen,—
While all the feathered Bards of June
Poured many a song in cheeriest tune,
Until the dizzy air would swim
Inebriate with their bridal hymn,
As Beauty's Spirit, young and warm,
Was wed to her enamored Form;
And there, long past the morning hour,
He'd wander on from flower to flower,
With the slow step which comes of thought,
And the calm joy reflection brings,—
Like some immortal Bard who sought
Communion with the Soul of Things;
Half-seemed it that his musings rare
Played visibly around him there,
As over his serene high brow
Light quivered through the quivering bough.

He loved all Nature, and a thrill
Of joy would fire his infant blood,
As in the vale, or on the hill,
He read the life of leaf and bud;

And to each shrub and plant assigned
Its place beside its brother kind;
And many a humble plant he sought,
Nor scorned the humblest, for the Boy
Had learned of Nature, who had nought
But was to him a very joy.
There was no flower, of field or grove,
But loved to bloom for him to love;
And they would almost seem to give
New fragrance at his passing by,
Glad in the quiet light to live,
Of his love-beaming eye.

They were the earliest friends he knew—
Those bright-eyed children of the wood;
He cherished them with heart as true
As now, even in his babyhood.
How cunningly he would peep out,
Himself a rose-bud, from his bed,
Among the flowers which garlanded
His cradle round about;
They seemed his little sisters then—
Fair sisters, who with woven arms
Came lovingly, in all their charms,
To kiss him o'er and o'er again;
And every kiss of every flower
Would lend its perfume to his heart,

And in their sweet breath, hour by hour,
Would sweet affections start;
For lovely things have ever power
A kindred loveliness to impart.
So grew his care for pleasant plants
Still stronger, with his daily growth,
Till he could tread their native haunts,
And then he would go out, not loth
To wander far alone, and roam
Among them in their dewy home:
And he would muse among the fields
Upon the many things he found,
With what sweet will the young grass yields
Its fragrance, though by careless heels
Crushed, trodden to the ground;
How even the smallest drop of dew
When to its God, the Fire-orb, true,
Gives back a spark of heavenly flame—
A light betraying whence it came;
How blushingly the modest Rose
Receives the warm kiss of the sun;
Or with what sweet dependence grows
The '*gold-thread*,' where the streamlet flows,
Clinging around the alders there,
And waving in the stirring air,
Like a bright mesh of flaming hair,
Once Berenice's own;

Or bowing by the quiet rill—
His mirrored form before him,—
Learn how his soul, serene and still,
May catch the glory brooding o'er him;
And when the winds the surface rend
And bid the subtle shapes depart,
See how the blasts of passion send
Heaven's beauty from the troubled heart.

But more he mused on leaf and herb
And knowledge from their features wrought,
Far off where nothing might disturb
The quiet current of his thought.
He felt the moral of the spring,
Unconscious of it as the birds,
And glad as they his heart would sing,
Though it should never flow in words.
Each little flower wreathed a Soul
Which fed the spirit of its lover,
And softly from its petals stole
Into the blue eyes bending over:
Slight grace, and prideless heroism,
The Anemone his Nature lent,
As up from ruin's blank abysm
She led the young Year's armament;
The violets from their own blue eyes
Sent strength and courage to be lowly—

Content to bathe in heavenly dyes
  Tho' weeds outsoar'd them heav'n-ward wholly :
Ears up, lips parted, form erect,
  Straining to catch the faintest lay
  Of Zephyr for the dying May,
  The wild-pinks stood, and by their mien
Bade him, with sudden impulse checked,
List breathless, as he did expect
  Some whisper from the Great Unseen !
The lily with its odorous breath,
  Pure, floating over rank decay,
Like a white spirit o'er the death
And sin-slime of our world, who hath
  Her Angel-whiteness kept for aye—
Told him the tale it uttereth
To all whose hearts hear what it saith,
  Sweet lore that might not pass away,
Teaching how foulest deeps may bring
Into sweet life, the fairest thing.
And all the flowers that meet the kiss
  Of summer winds, or summer sun,
Made wise his open heart, for this,
  That he did love them every one.
He loved their form and varied hue,
But not as men have loved a bride—
Whose passion, like a feeble lamp,
Is quenched in every passing damp,

To her, in beauty, seeming true;
But when the first flush is withdrawn,
And youth and buoyancy are gone,
  Then coldly casting her aside,—
But though his flowers shrunk away
And withered with a pale decay,
His earnest heart would love them still,
  Aye, deeper than before,
As if a portion of their ill
  Its gentle nature bore;
For as their primal loveliness
Of form and hue grew less and less,—
As to a brother in distress,—
  He clung to them the more,
And wept when he at last must part
With what so well had cheered his heart.

There was no plant beneath his tread
  That he would pass unheeding by,
He knew the names of all, and read
  Their features with unerring eye;
For Science shed into his mind
The beauty of her light refined,
And it was given back so fair,
It seemed a radiant nature there.

There may be many a youthful peer
Of his, to love and beauty dear,

But other such I have not seen,
So buoyant-hearted, yet serene,
A child in tender years so green,
  Yet ripe in pleasant lore;
Full many a taller youth I ween,
Would bear his lamp of knowledge dim
Beside the clearer light of him,
  Though oft replenished o'er and o'er.

Full well I deem, to see him now,
  That glory, in some after day
  His search for wisdom to repay,
Will bind the laurel on his brow,
And high upon the enduring scroll
His name among the wise enroll.
Yet Boy! though Fame award thee nought,
  And though thy morning star should fail
  Before thy sun has pierced its veil,
Yet, for the lessons thou hast taught
Of pure love that despiseth naught,
And of the power and joy of thought,
We cannot deem thy race as one
Which left a noble deed undone!
Such love as thine no fame shall need,
It is its own surpassing meed,
Though summoned now, whatever pain
  To us thy going Home might cost,

Thy presence has not been in vain,
Or thy example lost.
There is no soul, which walks aright
And lives in Nature's simple truth,
Though in the weeds of Penury dight,
And eke the form of earliest youth,
But hath its mission to fulfil
In life, or deed of holy birth,
Which works unseen the Eternal Will,
As work the dew-drops on the hill
From heaven gliding soft and still,
To bless and purify the earth.

MAN AND THE YEARS.

A POEM FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Solemnly, oh very solemn,
Rolling on in deathward column,
  March the heavy-laden Years;
Each his won crown at the sundown,
  Yielding sternly, without tears;
Where the broken mould lies dampest,
Going down shroud-wrapt in tempest.

Man looks on the fleeting pageant,
Pining, moaning, and impatient,
  Silent weeps, or curses loud;
Smites his breast in mad unresting—
  Hides his red eyes in his shroud;
Thinking that the Past alone hath
Any true thing, thus he moaneth:

"Heavy Years! what Fate pursues you,
That ye tread on thus, to lose you
  In the dumb, unmoving murk,—

Hope's torch flaring to despairing,
'Gainst the hand it lit to work,
And your heaven-wings unsufficing,
Dark'ning Earth, but never rising?

Ye were white with blooming promise,
When your withered sires went from us,—
Tender-voiced with gentleness;
And the storm-rise from your calm eyes
Slunk off, moaning in distress,
Till a hush in our world-ferment,
Made men hopeful for a moment.

But ye move as moved your fathers,
With a wo that, snow-like, gathers
Icy weight in rolling on;
All things crushing in your rushing
To the sheer cliff of the Gone!
Down ye plunge, but leave your wo back,
Dark'ning any gleam ye throw back.

Where is Life, and where the music?
Where the goal the earnest True seek—
Pledged of you, ye lying Years?
Stout Endeavor wearies ever;
Death's bow softens not with tears;
Channels of a present sorrow
Are the charnels of to-morrow.

Do to die, and know to suffer;
World's-hate martyrs the world-lover;
  Hands are burned that snatch from fire,
And the kindly mar, by blindly
  Straining our faint life-chords higher;
Rude hands, carving the God-features,
Roughen them to their rude natures.

Babel overshadows Zion;
Discord strikes her harp of iron,
  And its clang shakes down the Good;
Falling Bastiles crush the castles
  That for Truth's defences stood;
And the few who would not harm her,
Fall beside her in their armor.

Nathless for re-uttered pledges,
And your hopes that tinged the edges
  Of our doubts with rainbow light,
We are groping down the sloping
  Grave-yard path in stormy night,
Cheated oft to think the glooms done,
When our fronts but smite a tomb-stone.

Yea, amid the sparkles lighting
The red anguish of such smiting,
  We, to think the new day broke,

Cried 'Eureka!' till the bleaker
Scorn-blast stung us, and we woke;
Woke to feel how deeply under
Fate still kept the folded wonder.

Veiléd friend and foe together,
On we ride, we know not whither,
Errant Knights of Destiny;
In tomb-darkness and the starkness
Of large-eyed Insanity,
Driving, each a mateless rover—
Pits below and thunders over.

Climbing up the hill-side crownward,
Sinking to its vale-bed downward,
Over graves we toil to ours—
Full graves sloping to the open,—
So we waste our vaunted powers;
All our wisest have but carried
Grave-lamps of the olden buried.

Bold to stab the dead-laid Percy,
But loud cowards shrieking 'mercy'
To the foot-braced, living foe;
Faint at Pity's far-off ditties,
Blind-mad at old Pharaoh,
But at home oppression's panders,
Supple-kneed to base commanders.

Or if we would pluck the darnel
From the flowers that rim our charnel,
  Straight they droop, their roots uptorn;
All our worship sinks to curship,
  Of its gracious manhood shorn;
It were better than this groping,
Nought to seek, and nothing hoping!

Striving to undo the meshes
Of oppression's coil that gashes
  Limb and soul where'er it twines,
We are strangling in the tangling
  Of the steel woof's knotted lines;
Our loud prayers from all these strange ills,
Drown the answers sweet o' the Angels.

Go, ye false Years, to your ruin,
With your doing and undoing;
  We will trust your lies no more;
And thou last of Saturn's cast off
  Children, fly with them before:
Sooner shall the doom hung o'er us
Shiver Life's Phantasmagories!"

So from all his wants and workings,
Sorrows, sins, and under-lurkings
  Of divineness and high aims,—

Weak but willing, unfulfilling
The grand sphere his being claims,
Man profaned the Angel-Ages,
Reading but their darker pages.

Then a voice serene and saintly
From the Years came, clear, but faintly,
Full of love-low chimes of Hope;
Grew its murmur deep and firmer,
As the speech took larger scope,
And from Truths by Trial yielded,
To the Soul a Temple builded.

"We are cloud-like brief and passing,
In your souls our image glassing,
That are dark or bright as we;
But around is calm and boundless
The sky-broad Eternity—
We are changing, mute or thundrous,
That is fathomless and wondrous.

Now we rain down want and sorrow,
Now from Kingly Orbs we borrow
Light to make our dun sides laugh;
Through all ranges of our changes
Runneth still God's hierograph,—
Still He keeps, like kindly fathers,
Yule-gifts till the darkness gathers.

Life, that bounds from God's heart-pulses
Is the sole Fate that convulses
  And pursues our heavy flight—
Everlasting Newness, casting
  The old glory into night—
And the Perfect struggling birthward,
Through the dead past trodden earthward.

Spirit only is eternal,
Forms have autumn-days and vernal—
  Have their beauty and decay,
But their trueness feeds the Newness,
  With the leaven of Life's For-aye;
Blossoms grow to seed-burs rougher,
That the in-life shall not suffer.

Mounded graves and piled up sorrows
Shed no darkness on your morrows,
  They but veil the *setting* hope,
That the orient, with more floreant
  Beauty, its dawn-gates may ope;
While you climb their steeps before you
Heaven shuts down yet closelier o'er you.

We are bearing forth on broad wings,
Sin's unrest and Truth's rewardings,
  And the doom that cannot fail—

As ye make them ye shall take them,
Or in dew, or smiting hail;
What ye planted ye must gather,
Grapes or thorns it boots not whether.

Would ye be as rocks, and pangless?
Were the serpent Wisdom fangless,
It would die among brute hoofs;
Steps to Heaven are fire-paven,
Stinging you with hot reproofs
For your lingering:—up!—awaken!
God is fleet and would be taken.

Life is in you, life is of you,
But its fountain springs above you,
Pressing on your shut hearts' will;
Fling them open 'neath the sloping
Heavens, and—ye shall have your fill;
Now it rains off to uncleanness,
From the low eaves of your meanness;

But may not be lost for ever;
Growing to a crystal river,
Earth shall gladden in its flow,
And the goodness by your rudeness
Spurned, shall bless the vales below;
Martyred Saviors of a nation
Bring the *world's* regeneration.

Ye are *in* the Babel noises,
And know not how all your voices
  Fold their roughness, tone on tone,
Into sweetness, whose completeness
  Is a Psalm before the Throne;
Hurl your works at wildest venture,
God shall sphere them round the center.

Not in us, but bowed above us,
Is the Heaven of Virtue's lovers—
  The Eternity of calm,
To which queenly Souls, serenely
  Rising, press with free foot-palm
On our white tops sunward bending,—
Night-black to the unascending.

Valor spends its prurient vigor
Battling Evil's phantom figure,
  Till it wearies in the Dark;
When if it will mount a little,
  Through the shadows grim and stark,
They will vanish to their sheer night,
In a higher faith's severe light.

Down from God your life-light blazes,
Parted in our earth-sprung hazes,
  Many-hued and dimly seen,

Yet it streams on, blue and crimson,
Violet, yellow, red and green;
Each his one ray deems the sole star,—
Drifting Earth's unchanging pole-star.

But of all your beams diversal,
Angels, rapt in sweet rehearsal
Of sweet music, yet can see
Bending arc-wise o'er your dark skies
A grand Bow stretched gloriously,
Promise, amid this Hope's setting,
Of a new dawn, storm-forgetting.

Let us pass unblamed, O mortals!
Since we bear you to the portals
Of a more majestic Doom.
What ye cherish, if it perish,
'Tis to give your God the room;
Treasures to the storm-waves given,
Leave the bark to float unriven.

Let us pass unblamed, O mortals!
We will bear you to the portals
Of the Heaven by Prophets seen;
While the far lyres of the star-choirs
Shall feel Earth's strike in between,
Fluttering the deep sky's blue banner
With her rapturous Hosanna!"

Roll along ye Years that waft us
To the boon of all Hereafters,
  Roll along unblamed of man;
O'er the tomb-stones of your doomed ones
  We will mount to greet the van
Of the immortal Years that bring us
Heaven to Earth, or Heaven-ward wing us.

AUTUMN HYMN.

Warrior-winds have swept the withered leaves
From the hill-side, and the valleys green:
By close thickets, and beneath the eaves
Of the jutty rocks, their heaps are seen.

Pale and yellow from their brittle stems,
Fell the Currant leaves, beside the wall,
So revealing the red coral gems
On the forehead of the coming Fall.

Then the Aspen's trembling with death's fear,
All the summer long, sunk down in death,
Sighing momently above their bier,
Then whirl'd off in Autumn's growing breath.

Fell the Birch leaves from the slender spray;
Hangs the tassel'd promise of the spring,
Like the hopes that cling to our decay
When the death-winds through our strip'd boughs sing.

Kindling fire-like at the touch of frost,
Died the Maple blushing as at birth;
So the old die, who have never lost
Childhood's young flush in the dust of earth.

So, awakened by Life's winter-breath,
Burns the pure flame, dim'd in summer's air,
In the heart nigh withered unto death—
Love's fire check'd by Fortune's sultry glare.

Treasures shower'd from the chesnut burs
Which stung once the fingers that would gripe,
So all Nature's own philosophers
Teach a waiting till the fruit be ripe.

Sad as death's hope in a life's despair,
Cling the withered Oak-leaves to their bough,
Not so mournful seem the wholly bare,
As the blighted pride which keeps them now;

Green as life's hope in the hour of death,
Stands the Holly, never bow'd or nip'd,
Lovelier shows it now, as human faith
Seems more seemly illy fellowship'd.

Pine and Cedar and the Hemlock's cone,
Green cathedrals of their thick boughs make,
Where the weak winds, faint with wandering, moan
Funeral hymnings for the old year's sake.

And a dull haze builds up all the sky
To a grave vault for the seasons dead,
Over whom the big sun swingeth high,
An eternal tomb-lamp round and red.

WORSHIP.

Beautiful ever is a holy Thought,
Though in the soul polluted and unchaste,
Like a white lily blooming o'er the waste
Of dank decay. It springeth forth untaught,
A pure spontaneous sense of Worship, wrought
By God's own Spirit, on the uneffaced
Divinity of Soul; a sweet foretaste
Of life's deep fullness, by all prophets sought.
It lives, a joy amid a world of wo,—
A beam of sunlight on a stormy sky,—
A seraph gliding amid fiends below,
That quail and cower beneath her loveful eye:
Like a child-seer it doth serenely go,
With prideless port of simple majesty.

When in our spirit springs new reverence
Of divine Beauty, shaming all the great,
And good, and holy, of our first estate,

Clad in meet symbols to the outward sense
It goeth forth, in the omnipotence
Of artless Truth, new Beauty to create;
Hence boweth Prayer, knee-bent beneath the weight
Of its most earnest aspirations,—hence
The Hermon-dew of Baptism, showering soft
As divine Mercy on the sin-parched heart,—
Thus bread, and the vine's fruitage bring their oft
Memorial of His Life, henceforth a part
Of our life's daily bread, that draws forever
Our infinite hunger, to the Infinite Giver.

Holiest of Symbols stands the awful Cross;
Type of the hero-spirit's martyr-deeds,
When with the sweat of agony it bleeds
Over slain Hopes, and Pleasure's utmost loss,
And pure Love's boon flung back with scornful toss,—
Yet never shrinking from the cause it pleads,
Even when the wrung, forsaken spirit feeds
On disappointments keener than remorse.
Whatever kind heart, sick at human wrongs,
Casts all its treasure, claiming no exemption,
Into the great price of the world's redemption,
To it, to such, that hallowed Sign belongs;
Though oft profaned, it fronts contending vans,
Where creed on creed pours down its warring partisans.

Even as the viewless Soul of Beauty decks
Itself in flowers, with each returning spring
Our holy Thought puts on its blossoming
Of visible forms, made richer by the wrecks
Of all the past, as the old greenness makes
The new more verdant. An eternal thing,
It lives unaltered through the perishing
Of leaf-like symbols, and forever takes
A lovelier vesture at the sweet upgrowth
Of its spring newness, more and more divine,
Pure and ethereal, as its own life doth
In Heaven's sunlight grow more crystalline:
And never lives a kingly Soul but loathes
To cloak his breathing Thought in his dead father's
clothes.

Shall the new corn put on the old ear's husk?
The withered foliage clothe the budding spring?
The healéd cripple to his crutches cling?
Or day forever wear its morning dusk?
Eternal Life still works eternal change:
If thou wouldst nourish an abiding thing,
Make the Great Past thy servant, not thy king,
And be thy field the Present's boundless range:
God is not perished, that we need look back
To his dim steps on Being's wave-worn shore,

Nor walk our spirits with so huge a lack,
That we must beg what eldest Ages wore,
And load our young Thought with the iron shirt
By bigots raked from some Judean grave-yard's dirt!

Let every spirit bend before the shrine
Of its own God,—seen in the wonder-zone
Of its miraculous life, that keeps alone
The sure God-records, written line by line
In its expanding being: it is thine
To scatter Wisdom, not Belief; to give
Bread, not Digestion, that thy kind may live,—
Even the "True Bread" of a Life Divine.
Free as ascending mists, that on the air
Fashion all beautiful shapes, from spirit-deeps
Goes up spontaneously the soul of Prayer,
As, blazing sun-like, Trust immortal keeps
Its high path o'er the world of thought and sense,
Light of our souls, and life of all our Reverence.

All things grow holy to the holy soul,
Time and the place wherein its blessed deeds
Are borne, and love-sown thoughts spring up, the seeds
Of after blessings. From the utmost pole
To its far fellow, arches o'er the whole

One temple-dome of Love, wherein she leads
Perpetual Worship, though no victim bleeds
And burns for Superstition's hungry ghoule.
Day after day, hallowed by generous toil,
Leads in perpetual dance its Sabbath hours;
Bowed o'er the bench, or kneeling on the soil,
He worships best who best bestows his powers;
And never yet a deed was done for love
Of God or man, but 't rose a holy thing above.

THE POND LILY.—(*Nymphea odorata.*)

Nymph, that floatest on the waters
. Queenly as a swan,
Purest of the Summer's daughters,
From whose heart have zephyrs brought us
All thy ordorous benison;—
Stooping on the brim
Of thy blue-eyed pool,
Let me see thy broad leaves swim
In the wavelets cool.

When the morn, from twilight's budding,
Bloometh like a rose,
All the clouds with glory flooding,
And the stars, heaven's azure studding,
Shed their beauty as it grows,—
Thou art folded up
In thy vest of green,
From thy gold and pearly cup
Pouring sweets unseen.

Soon as any sunny glimmer
Strikes the level blue,
And the shadows, dim and dimmer,
Melt before the delicate shimmer
Of each pure and glowing hue,
At the earliest kiss
Of the softest ray,
All thy deep heart's sinlessness,
Opens to the day.

When the golden hour is fading
In the blushing west,
Winds, like honey-bees come laden—
Like a lover from his maiden,
With the sweet wealth of thy breast;
And the wavelets twine
Their pure arms around
That delightful form of thine,
With a low, soft sound.

Kneeling here, beneath the willow
On the water's marge,
Where the twinkling mimic billow
Rocks thee, on thy liquid pillow,
Like a white-sail'd Indian barge
With its spicy freight—
Let me lay one kiss,
Lighter than the dew-drop's weight,
On thy heart of bliss.

I would be thy spirit-sister ;
In my calm thought's deep,
Pure and sweet, the sole exister,
Glimpse-view'd through the woody vista—
Where old truths, like oak-trees, keep
Their high shield above ;
There to grow, and float,
In the soothing breath of love—
Silent and remote.

When the rays of glory, beaming
From the warm life-sun,
Come through mournful shadows streaming—
So for Beauty's choir redeeming
Secret sorrow's veiléd Nun,
I would bare, like thee,
All my deep heart's-core,
While low-breathing poesy
Steals its honied lore.

Then, when fades the mortal even,
Dying in the west,
I would, every wind of heaven
Might be fill'd with odors, given
From the love-blooms of my breast ;
While the swelling deep
Of serenest thought,
Rocks me to a fragrant sleep
Dream-refreshed and short.

DORA.

In her chamber musing stilly,
While the eve lay soft and mute
On the hills, and clouds as hilly—
List'ning but the insect's flute
With a humming music coming
Mingled with the wood-tick's drumming,
And the leaf-strung zephyr's lute—

Dora sat; in thought revolving
All the things of Wonder-land;
Dream to fainter dream dissolving,
Fixless as the silver sand
Through the clipping fingers slipping,
Fairy after fairy tripping
Fast away, a fleeting band.

Came the witching tales of Magic
Thickly sown in childhood's earth,
Marvels beautiful and tragic,
Piercing the thin mask of mirth

Deeply under to the wonder,
Whose intense aim for the Yonder
Seeks the pole-star of our birth.

Came the tale of Cinderella,
Once which bade us not despond,
As the pride which could not quell her
Bowed before that potent wand;
And to sadden, thrill and gladden,
Woke the story of Aladdin,
Oft in dim-eyed halos con'd.

Heaved the jars of Ali Baba
With their monstrous birth of men,
Sweat the demons at their labor,
In enchanted cave and den;
And the cunning, errand running,
Nimble Ariël rose, sunning
His quick wing in day again.

Lovely as the Morning's peăn,
When its song greets ear and eye,
From her pearl-grot in the Egean
Rose that child of Phantasy,
Undine, daughter of the water,
With the sweet soul, Love had brought her,
Sad with Immortality.

Faint, uncertain, dim and dimmer,
Throngs of kindred beings past,
Fleet and thrilling as the glimmer,
When the hearth-fire sobs its last,
With a mutter and low flutter,
Which makes silence felt, and utter
Darkness tremulous and aghast!

Onward swept the wondrous pageant,
But a childish prayer was left
For some strange, mysterious agent,
With light van and fingers deft,
So to serve her and re-nerve her
When the hand of care would swerve her;
Guarding still her being's weft.

For these many-hued Auroras
Lit all visions of her eye,
And her thoughts were dove-white soarers
In a vermil-tinctured sky,
Where were merging girlhood's virgin
Love-dreams, with the calm, unsurging
Blue of aspirations high.

"Wingéd sprite or limber fairy,
Genii mild or gentle Gnome,
Beings slender-armed and airy,
Nymphs who make your veiléd home

In the amber-curtained chamber
Of a Rose, or sporting, clamber
O'er the nodding Blue-bell's dome;

"Come!" she whispered, like a whisper
Of the Zephyr which would make
Not a wrinkled wavelet crisper,
On the starred and moony lake,
"Come, O queen-eyed Nymphs, and keen-eyed
Fairies, from my Love serene-eyed,
With a gift for Love's dear sake.

"From my young heart's one companion
Mated with its earliest love,
Life-trunk of affection's banian,
Center of its pillared grove,
Mid the gleaming light of dreaming
Fancies through its green roof streaming,
Rooted never more to rove.

"Bird or Bee or bonny Budling—
Take the form befitting best,
To the eager Love-babes, huddling
Round the hearth-fire of my breast,
Bring unstinted treasures, minted
In his rich heart, and imprinted
With his image, beauty-blest.

"Spirits strong, of piercing vision,
And great wings, the sky to dare,
Waft me to some realms Elysian
O'er our cloud-encumbered air,
Where the Force is, that divorces
Doubt and hope, our joys and curses,
Love's delight and Love's despair."

Then a dream came down on Dora,
Such as veils the outward eye,
And a wide wing stooped before her,
Grand with Sunset's Alchemy;
Giant-sinewed far it winnowed—
Far as the round world continued—
Rock and hill and glowing sky.

And the old crags, unconvulsing,
Melted from their dull opaque,
Till she saw their slow life-pulsing—
Throbs which human ages make—
How each one adds to its monads,
Spark on spark, until a sun glads
Heaven, and man leaps forth awake.

Saw how every atom wheeleth
To its own by sure decree,
How the Heart of all things feeleth
Wants of each eternally;

Saw the sources of the Forces
Which whirl Nature down its courses
In vast life and harmony!

All the clouds of all the sorrows
Which have swelled life's thunder-gust,
All the hopes which ere their morrows
Drooped and dwindled into dust,
Pure and sky-bright from the twilight
Rose before the glorious eye-light
Of that broad-winged Angel—TRUST.

Wildest dreams of wild romances
Shoot their arrows of desire,
Impotent, from faint strung fancies,
Toward that everlasting Higher,
Where, uplifted, softly drifted
The serene soul of that gifted
Maiden, Love-taught to aspire.

Arched a rainbow o'er the Sphynx's
Smiling front and cloudy trail,
And the mystic tie which links us
To the Life beyond the Pale,
Down the hueless chain, sent viewless
Thrills of prescience, till the mewless
Soul half rent the eternal veil.

Then she knew that Life is onward
Ever, though its hopes should die;
That the darkest orbs wheel sunward
To a grand Eternity;
Knew by seeing, Life is Be-ing,
Will and work in one agreeing,
And high Trust is augury.

Soon the wing-beat fan'd these sparkles
Of dim truth to waves of light,
Driven in wide concentric circles,
Pulsing to the Infinite;
Time and error, hope and terror,
And the cloud-built Doubt's sierra
Faded from their noiseless flight.

Then it seemed, to trancéd Dora,
That her loved-one's radiant soul
Was the central light before her,
Round which swept, as planets roll,
Every creature, Man and Nature,
Star and Flower, new love to teach her—
Love that, widening, clasped the whole.

Inward, thrilling to the center,
Outward, to the shores of Dream,
Did one living spirit enter—
Inward glow and outward gleam,

Re-creating, renovating
Life from loss, and permeating
All the sphere to Thought's extreme.

Beauty stooped and kissed the Lowly,
Earth with starry sisters ran,
Heaven sloped down its peerless glory
Level to the foot of man,
While the glancing feet, of dancing
Spirits hand in hand advancing,
Passed as far as vision can.

Soon, her startled lids upheaving,
Her dark eyes a moment strove,
From the light within, unweaving
Beams from azure eyes above;—
One before her, bending o'er her,
Taught the waking soul of Dora,
Life's true wizardry is Love.

THE LESSON.

There was a little Rose-bush, where the brook flows,
With two little rose-buds and one full rose,
The breath of their spirits shed forth sweet smell,
That filled like a melody the air of the dell.

When the sun went down to his bed in the west,
The little Buds leaned on the Rose-mother's breast,
And the mother and the sisters, all night long,
Looked up to the heavens and their far bright throng,
And silently, in odors, they communed with each other,
Bent lovingly and meek on the bosom of their mother.

"O mother!" said the little one, with pouting red lips,
"I would that the Dew-fay that o'er the mead trips,
Would bring me a Star when the day comes dim,
And God does'nt need them to burn round Him."

Just then a tiny dew-drop, that hung o'er the dell,
In the heart of the Bud like a star-beam fell;
But impatiently she flung it away from her leaf,
And it fell on the mother like the tear of its grief;

While she to her bosom with scornful pride,
Folded a Fire-fly that came by her side.

"Heed!" said the Mother-rose, "Budling mine!
Reach not forth for the good not thine;
Nothing is *thine* which makes not *thee*,
All other gain thy loss shall be."

The poor little bud with a deadlier hug,
Maugre the mother's words, clung to the Bug,
Till the struggling insect tore the vest
Of purple and green which veiled her breast.

The morn came up, and she noted with grief
The blooming of her sister-bud, leaf by leaf,
As the cold dew mingled with all her heart,
And grew of her beauty and life a part;
While she, as fair and sweet at first,
Hung her head all faint with wounding and thirst.

Bright grew the sunshine; poor little Bud!
How drooped her form with its languid blood,
Till from the mother's heart, where it lay hid,
Into her own the dew-drop slid.

Night came back—the fire-flies flew,
But she let them pass, and drank of the dew.

MOTHER MARGARY.

On a bleak ridge from whose granite edges
Sloped the rough land to the grizzly North,
And where hemlocks, clinging to the ledges,
Like a thin'd banditti straggled forth;
In a crouching, wormy-timbered hamlet,
Mother Margary shivered in the cold,
With a tattered robe of faded camlet
On her shoulders, crooked, weak and old.

Time on her had done his cruel pleasure,
For her face was very dry and thin,
And the records of his growing measure
Lined and cross-lined all her shrivelled skin.
Scanty goods to her had been allotted,
Yet her thanks rose oftener than Desire,
While her bony fingers, bent and knotted,
Fed with withered twigs the dying fire.

Raw and dreary were the nórthern winters,
Winds howled pitiless around her cot,
Or with long sighs made the jarring splinters
Moan the misery she bemoaned not.
Drifting tempests rattled at her windows,
And hung snow-wreaths round her naked bed,
While the wind flaws muttered o'er the cinders,
Till the last spark struggled and was dead.

Life had fresher hopes when she was younger,
But their dying wrung out no complaints,
Cold, and Penury, and Neglect, and Hunger,
These to Margary were guardian saints.
Of the pearls which one time were the stamens
'Neath the pouting petals of her lips,
Only four stood yet, like swarthy Brahmins
Penance-parted from all fellowships;

And their chatter told the bead-roll dismal
Of her grim saints, as she sat alone,
While the tomb-path opened down abysmal,—
Yet the sunlight through its portal shone.
When she sat, her head was prayer-like bending,
When she rose, it rose not any more,—
Faster seemed her true heart, graveward tending,
Than her tired feet, weak and travel-sore.

She was mother of the dead and scattered,—
Had been mother of the brave and fair,—
But her branches, bough by bough, were shattered,
Till her torn heart was left dry and bare.
Yet she knew,—though sorely desolated,—
When the children of the Poor depart,
Their earth-vestures are but sublimated,
So to gather closer in the heart.

With a courage which had never fitted
Words to speak it to the soul it blest,
She endured, in silence and unpitied,
Woes enough to mar a stouter breast.
There was born such holy Trust within her
That the graves of all who had been dear,
To a region clearer and serener
Raised her spirit from our chilly sphere.

They were footsteps on her Jacob's ladder;
Angels to her were the Loves and Hopes
Which had left her purified but sadder, —
And they lured her to the emerald slopes
Of that Heaven where anguish never flashes
Her red fire-whip, happy land whose flowers
Blossom over the volcanic ashes
Of this blighted, blighting world of ours.

All her power was a love of Goodness,
  All her wisdom was a mystic faith
That the rough world's jargoning and rudeness
  Turn to music at the gate of death.
So she walked while feeble limbs allowed her,
  Knowing well that any stubborn grief
She might meet with, could no more than crowd her
  To the wall whose opening was Relief.

So she lived an anchoress of Sorrow,
  Lone and peaceful on the rocky slope,
And, when burning trials came, would borrow
  New fire of them for the lamp of Hope.
When at last her palsied hand, in groping,
  Rattled tremulous at the gated tomb,
Heaven flashed round her joys beyond her hoping,
  And her young soul gladdened into bloom.

SPIRIT LOVE.

I WILL love thee as the Flowers love,
That in the summer weather,
Each standing in its own place
Lean rosy lips together,
And pour their sweet confession
Through a petal's bended palm,
With a breath that only deepens
The azure-lidded calm
Of the heavens bending o'er them,
And the Blue Bells hung before them,
All whose odor in the silence is a psalm.

I will love thee as the Dews love,
In chambers of a Lily,
Hung orb-like and unmeeting,—
With their flashes blending stilly,—
By the white shield of the petals
Held a little way apart,
While all the air is sweeter
For the yearning of each heart,—

That yet keep clear and crystal,
Their globéd spheres celestial,
While to and fro their glimmers ever dart.

I will love thee as the Stars love,
In sanctity enfolden,
That tune in constellations
Their harps divine and golden,
Across the heavens greeting
Their sisters from afar—
The Pleiades to Mazzaroth,
Star answering to star;
With a love as high and holy
And apart from all the lowly—
Swaying to thee like the planets without jar.

I will love thee as the Spirits love,
Who, free of Earth and Heaven,
Wreathe white and pale-blue flowers
For the brows of the Forgiven,
And are dear to one another
For the blessings they bestow
On the weary and the wasted
In our wilderness of wo;
By thy good name with the Angels,
And thy human heart's Evangels,
Shall my love from holy silence to thee go.

SPIRIT MARRIAGE.

I WILL love Thee as the Cloud loves—
The soft cloud of the Summer;
That winds its pearly arms round
The rosy-tinted comer,
Interwreathing till but one cloud
Hangs dove-like in the blue,
And throws no shadow earthward,
But only nectar dew
For the roses blushing under,
And, purified from thunder,
Floats onward with the rich light melting through.

I will love thee as the Rays love,
That quiver down the ether,
That many-hued in solitude,
Are pure white, knit together;
And, if the heavens darken,
Yet faint not to despair,
But bend their bow, hope-shafted,
To glorify the air,—

That do their simple duty,
Light-warm with love and beauty,
Not scorning any low plant anywhere.

I will love thee as the Sweets love,
From dewy Rose and Lily,
That fold together cloud-like,
On zephyrs riding stilly,
Till charméd Bard and Lover,
Drunk with the scented gales,
Name one Sweet and another,
Not knowing which prevails;
The wingéd airs caress them,
The hearts of all things bless them,
So will we float in love that never fails.

I will love thee as the Gods love—
The Father God and Mother,
Whose intermingled Being is
The Life of every other,—
One, absolute in Twoness,
The universal Power
Wedding Love the never-ending,
Through Planet, Man, and Flower;
Through all our notes shall run this
Indissoluble Oneness,
With music ever deep'ning every hour.

THE LABORER'S THOUGHTS.

We are born Men, to whom high thoughts are given,
Heroic hearts, and souls of manly worth;
Why do we bend our foreheads to the earth,
And yield the kingly heritage of Heaven?
Why tame to deadness the keen eye whose levin
Flashed hot rebuke, when loathed Oppression's girth
Galled the flayed bosom? Why this utter dearth
Of human valor,—strength that might have riven
Our chains, and taught the oppressors what it is
To do and suffer tyranny, and how deep
And sheer before them yawns the wide abyss,
Where Ruin garners what the Avengers reap;
Rouse! we've a weapon now more sure than steel,
Strike home a mightier blow than fleshly arm can deal!

What! had we not the nerve, when silk-soft hands
Put on the yoke, to dash the Insulter down;
Was it *Forgiveness*, that we bore the frown

Of our proud masters, till'd their teeming lands,
And stooped unmurmuring to their hard commands,
Till toil and scorn and suffering had grown
Familiar to us as our own hearth-stone,
And time was marked with falling tears for sands?
But we were POOR, and out of our own want
And natural love, they forged the links we wear;
They knew how Beggary and keen Famine daunt
A Father's heart, and drive him to despair;
We had but starving babes, and hands to toil,—
They had the hoarded wealth, the wisdom, and the soil.

But now we know what right belongs to man,
A Child's birthright to walk God's earth and live.—
And learning this hath taught us to forgive,
For we are brothers. What we must we can
Suffer, in meekness, till our free breath fan
Our wrongs away, than clouds more fugitive:
And we will breathe it, till the mountains give
Our voice to Heaven, and Heaven through all its span
Resound our challenge to the hoary ill,
Whose life, fore-doomed, shall feel it like the fire
That cleaves thick midnight with electric thrill;
Brave hearts shall leap to hear their dumb desire
Mount Heaven in words, claiming the long-sought Good,
When Wealth and Toil unite in one free Brotherhood.

In Love and Wisdom let us win, for all,
What loveless cunning gave the stronger few;
Not for one eye doth Heaven spread its blue,
Green Earth her beauty, and the russet Fall
Gem with ripe fruits her golden coronal;—
All eyes should own delight in every hue,
All hands should claim the glad task to renew
Earth's fleeting bounties, and no hunger-call
Go forth unanswered: One broad heritage
God gives his children, and to us a power
To make delightful the wide war we wage
On Want and Ill—through which we win the dower
Of strength, true manhood, and quick sympathy,
Things which shall set, at last, Man and his Labor free.

FROM THE BEREAVED TO NATURE.

Not yet, not yet, O darling mine!
O Mother Nature call me not to-day,
With wood and wave and beautiful sunshine,
And all thy fresh Divine,—
For heavy shadows on my spirit weigh;
Along thy Gothic aisles of pine
I hear the slow receding tread
Of one unseen, but felt at every footfall dread.

Cover thy beams, O clear-eyed sun,
Fold on thy golden breast a mantling cloud,
Nor mock the shadow of that awful One
With splendors vainly shown;
The slow out-flowing of a fore-gone shroud
Hangs o'er me heavy and alone,
And a faint vapor, hot and black,
With smothering folds involves the pale Destroyer's track.

From dancing leaves and dimpling waves,
O thou bland breathing of the odorous South—
Thou whose invisible and soft tide laves
The shores of human graves,
Call back the music of thy mellow mouth,
And bind it in its rosy caves;
An air whose very sighs are bliss,
Would shame my breathéd wo in such an hour as this.

Forbear sweet birds your wonted lays,
Only sad Cuckoo and thou Mourning Dove;
A mystic Death-march shakes the woodland sprays,
And, joined from many ways,
Aspires to drown the starry songs of love;
Sweet choir of childhood's happy days,
Cease; let that tune alone ascend
Till it hath risen where all sounds harmonious blend.

Deeper for any glad'ning thing
Is Sorrow's pang, and Love's lament for loss;
Joy barbs with fire affliction's keenest sting,
And Azrael's coming wing
Were fittest fan for brows that on the cross
Wrinkle with fiery suffering;
O then withhold a little while,
Dear mother mine, thy charms of beckoning hand and smile.

If thy warm sunbeams could revive
The stiff clay mouldering in the sunless tomb,
Thy joyous sounds could make that ear alive—
Thy flowers out-drive
Death-taint and coffin-odor with sweet bloom,—
Then could I bid thee thrive
And pour their vivic virtues there
Where the converging tracks of all my sad thoughts are.

But, far from any power of thine,
The cherish'd soul hath toss'd away its chain,
Soaring aloft from a consuming shrine,
Out of thy call and mine,
Into its high, invisible victor-reign!
Drunken with sorrow's bitter wine,
The senses reel, and spurn relief
That mocks alike their pangs and the soul's hopeful grief.

Its clay thou canst alone remould
In other forms to flow, to bloom, or fly,
But nevermore its broken urn make hold
Its pulses free and bold,

And that true soul of large humanity;
O Mother strong and manifold,
Thou art bereaved, and hast no power
To save thyself, or thine, in death's triumphal hour.

Mock not the eye with pleasant shapes,
The ear with mingled songs of joyous tone,
While each bereavéd sense some image drapes
From memory, that but apes
The perished Real. Through the Soul alone
The wrung heart into bliss escapes;
Avails no outward touch to heal
Wounds which the central core and life of being feel.

I turn me from thee, Mother mild,
Into the heavens of Thought, and Spirit's Faith;
There, great and calm, with Godhood over smiled,
Loving and undefiled—
I see the dead victorious over death;
Little by little I am wiled
From pain of loss, and heart's distress,
To the unspeakable rest of holy Blessedness.

A little while, O Mother mine,—
Darling of eye and heart,—a little while,
And thou mayst wake to me thy wind-harp fine
In tremblings of the Pine,

Thy bird-songs, and the dance of leaves, and smiles
Of dimpled waves and bright sunshine,
When the grief-chastened Senses rise
Till to the Spirit's faith their full amen replies.

With softened tears will blend thy dews,
With pangless sighs thy blandest zephyrs breathe,
And through the heart thy many forms and hues
Their hallowed joy diffuse,
While odors sweet, and sweet thoughts inter-
wreathe
Their charms, to soothe the healing bruise;
All that was lost shall come again,
And Soul and Sense alike grow stronger for their pain.

THE AUTUMNAL EQUINOX.

Sorrow and Joy that interweave
The raven with the golden locks,
Fall brings to them who smile and grieve—
Their soul's Autumnal Equinox.

Tracking the pastures to the pebbled marge
Of Ocean, through rank grasses brown and sere,
With chill winds—wearied of their chase at large
Over the salt, wide-waving hemisphere—
Moaning around me of the dying year,
Themselves in long reeds dying,—
In concert with their sighing
I felt a low strain's tremulous hum,
Along the misty grandeur come
Of that uncross'd and solemn voicéd sea
Whereon we drive, and it went over me,
A wave of low-toned music, in spray-rain,
Breaking, and rippling back into a sad refrain;
And when the moan'd thought took the pen's constraint,
It pined away to this Autumnal plaint.

O sad-sweet Autumn! O more sad than sweet!
Swarthy Guerrilla nurst in Ruin's lair;
Insatiate spoiler of the loved and fair—
The all too fleet;
Grim prophet, still with fixed and rigid finger
Pointing to that inexorable tread,
Whose sullen beat—
Measured and firm with fate that will not linger—
Summons the living to the dead;
O why, red Autumn, with such eager joy
Wilt thou destroy
The blended beauties of the golden year,
Rounding with grief our joy-curved planisphere?

With heavy heart and humid eye,
I mark the pallid glories die,—
The fading of the woven hues
That ran through summer's busy loom;
The fainting of the unseen flowers of song,
That all the glad months long
Were uttered beauty and melodious bloom,
Whose fragrance came in music. If I choose
I cannot stint my sadness, when I muse
How these are slain by thy keen breath,
O pander of the Tomb,
O parasite of Death!

The winds moan in the fields, and make
The firstlings of Decay sing auto-dirges,
And premonitions which green life may take,
Sighingly as the seared; moan, too, the surges,
Along thick-weeded rocks, while salt-cold tears
Silverly trickle down the Sea-King's beard,
A tinkle in the moaning, faintly heard,
Sad as the clash of gems round Wealth's or Beauty's bier;
The very hearth-fire moans and sobs, as though
Its fluttering pulses quivered with our wo,
That made its rosy lips grief-garrulous,
So sadly well they are attuned with us.

The sun walks up the leaden sky, and down,
In a pale amber ring
Storm-heralding,
Nor can his fires avail to fling
The portent from him, that hath cast its frown
Over their burning, with his flight to roll
And round him still to cling,
Like some foreshadowed doom around a Prophet's soul.

I moan, too, in these moanings,
I answer in like wise
The hollowest intonings
Of their most hollow sighs.

My spirit in the shadow trips,
Stumbling on doubts, and into darkness slips
I moan, but not because I see
Dear Summer waning patiently
To a most sad eclipse
Of all she hath most fair,
While low sighs part her pallid lips,
And lift her fading hair;
Not that the keen-edged air
Shaves to the level of the foot of Death
The heights of Beauty, with its cutting breath;
Though these were sad enough to start
The sobbing Grief,—young nursling of my heart,—
From the short sleep of her self-wearying:
But for the deeper sting
Of their predictive menace, like a dart
Shot from the random bow of the dread Archer,
And falling short
By one suspended plunge of his swift ashen charger:
But for the quickened stirring
Of allayed pangs, and tears for human loss;
For the too fast recurring
Of doubts foregone and sorrows trailed across
The soul's Serene, like clouds across the sun,
Which, if not deep as very night,
Still by that ring of half-quenched light
Portend a stormier darkness glooming on.

Thrice ere the round moon's ebbing light waned
thrice
To its decay, the tramp of the White Horse
Hath trod out jewels from my crown of love;
Thrice the pale Rider, stooping, from above,
His brows, that mock remorse,
Hath torn my loved ones off with hand of ice;
I mourn to lose from earth and me
The fearless-faithful and the humbly good,—
To be toss'd forward on the bounding sea
Three billows more
From sight of shore,
Towards the long waste of utter solitude.

Thrice to her grave beyond the western line
Of utmost day, the dying moon had gone,
Thrice rose again into her silver dawn,
And smiled by turns on graves that cover Mine,
Even at my feet unyielding. So divine
Her silent strength is, lightly as a fawn
She leaps the pits where lurking ruins yawn;
And walks enwreathéd in her virgin shine.
So cloud-like heavy are our lives, we sink
Darkened and darkening to the sheer Unknown,
Now rain down sorrows from the looming brink
For other's fate, then follow to our own;

And scarce one Spirit from these fogs of Sense
Can flash out a pure gleam on its own Where or Whence!

Thus while the Autumn's breath,
Surcharged with frosty death,
Ruffled Atlantic's bosom to a moan,
Deeper and deeper still,
With more prevailing chill,
The sighing plaint o'erswept, and heaved my own;
It marr'd the mirror, but quenched not the sun;
High over all the orb of Faith went on,
And now I bless the showering down of grief,
For but in rain dark skies find blue relief.

Anon the waters sang a blither tune,
Leaped on the beach, and with low rustling laugh'd;
The sun, gone up into his Hall of Noon,
Kiss'd the dun clouds into a rosy swoon—
Light-drunk and blushing with the wine they quaffed:
Sang the long reeds love-softly, in a lull
Of the faint breeze pluck'd of its frosty tooth;
And the red kindling forest looked, in sooth,
More dreamily calm and queen-like beautiful,
Than in its prime of youth.
Forth from its iron cell
The fire laughed long and well,

With gleeful crackling, full of merry hints
Of Mirth and social cheer
To crown the garnered year,
What time Joy scarcely dints,
With rapidest footprints,
The virgin snow and twinkling atmosphere.
The heart put off its heavy guise
Of sorrow slowly, and, grown Autumn-wise,
Felt change its murmur to a song of Faith,
And calm-eyed triumph over frost and death.

Shame be, it said, that any heart should keep
The felon grief within its sanctuary,
To love and life, to God, and to the very
Heart feeding it, a traitor stained and deep.
More shame that a grown soul supinely lingers
With backward looking to the doubts that haunted
Dawn's twilight, while, around him and undaunted,
The Powers of Nature, like love-covenanted
Pure Angels pointing Godward with white fingers,
All tell of Life, themselves but strong Life-bringers.
Autumn is not decay, but mellowing
Of the crude germs that glorify the Spring
In its new dawn; it is not death,
But life's fruition. Nothing perisheth,

But in its husk and shroud, against the waste
Of storm and winter, guards the immortal spark;
Round the full year is Life by new Life chased,
Nor throbs more glad, in Summer's arms embraced
Than when her own ice-woven zone
Is round her, cold and stark.

To spirits who have sown
Their seed in spring-time, and in summer done
Their summer-task, the Autumn is not sad.
They know from whence all Winter-joys are had,
And winter hopes; they know, and they alone.
Let flowers go down to wilt on Flora's tomb,
They have fruits now; and every fruitless bloom
Whose dower is sweetness, they have harvested,
And it lives in them by sweet thoughts it shed,
Like refined odor, though its leaves are dead.
If death strike down the loved, they do not say
"The chain is snap'd!" but "We are drawn
By one link more anear the heights, where dawn
The fore-sent glories of the eternal Day."

Under the loosening clasp of leaves,
That tremble like a flickering flame,
The little Buds bind fast, in cone-like sheaves,
The life, whose loss the mourner grieves,
Yet in new springs to greet with new acclaim:

And the wise gather strength from these
To wrestle with the doubts that come
Like clouds, whose tempest-pinions hum
In gales of the heart's Autumn. When he sees
That nothing *ends*, but all prepares to be,
That Nature makes the flower and tree
Immortal, he believes from thence
That a more lofty Excellence
Shall reap a higher Immortality.

Then was I glad when I remembered this,
That even the outward charm of common things
Is born of Beauty who is conquerless;—
Who from her fall with ample vigor springs
To claim anew her kindred and her crown;
Then the full heart saw all its grief struck down;
No room was left for breathings of distress,
For winds, to sigh, must traverse emptiness.
In lighter mood I measured back
Along the fields my morning track.
Full many flowers, that overcame the wrath
Of stormy winds, hung nodding round my path,
Where alder-banks with ruby jewels crown'd,
Stretching their green arms round,
Fenced narrow patches into warm enclosures,
And on the low rim of the pool of osiers

They peeped and glittered to the noon's grave smile—
Brave bands in Beauty's shattered rank and file—
And glad brown-breasted birds sang momently the while.

She seemeth now the soul of every scene,
Dear Beauty, fearless and the same forever
That she hath been, high and serene,
And faithless to her children never,
Whether old Winter shakes his hoary beard
In wrath at her blithe coming, or the wierd
June winds kiss out the love-faint dews that quiver
With overfulness of delight, insphered
By the flush'd arms of Roses,—
Still like a Queen
With dauntless mien,
She champions the soul's best faith.
When, round her reign, the strength of Autumn closes
With blight and death,
And the wild rout of grief and doubt
Assails the soul that on her life reposes,
For many a sweetness lost
She wrings from wind and frost
A glorious victory; and such boot they render
Into her cunning hands, the fading year
Glides down the slant path of its grave anear,
In more than primal splendor.

If so transcendant gleamings flash
From one brief jarring of the gate of death,
Then, the cheered spirit saith,
Let its rough hinges crash
What time they will to welcome me
Into its glorious realm of holy mystery!

When the scared flocks of tender flowers grow pale,
As the wolf-winds come howling through the vale;
And o'er her pure consuming cheeks droop down
The fairest buds of Flora's jewelled crown,
From which her vain tears wash their hues, to stain
That cheek in mockery of its own, again,
Unconquered Beauty cheers the stricken Queen
With purple stars that fro n the hedges lean,
In varied constellations; and, between,
With pomp of gold to shame the wrinkled sod,
Fuller than Aaron's blooms a slender rod:
Even Spring's young darling dares the growing cold—
Brave Dandelion with his shield of gold,—
Come back like things of childhood to the old,
When all beside is slipping from their hold;—
And humble flowers that wait unknown till fame
Rewards the worthy with a song and name,
By trampled way-sides tempt the avenging blast;
To Beauty's banner faithful to the last.

When her deep blush at Autumn's traitor kiss
Fades to white death, and dies the poor betrayer,
Scorned of the tyrant whom he served to slay her,
Slowly she sinks, in utter silentness,
To her life-guarding tomb,
Wept o'er by every withered bloom,
Whose feathered seedlings ride upon the gale,
Full of unconscious nerve to re-assail
Their haughty captor, and to plant once more
Her rescued banner where it waved before.

THE GARDEN.

I was a boy when first my Father gave
From his broad fields a fair uncultured plot,
Flowerless and weedless for my garden spot,
With choice of many seeds, that in their grave
With husky cerements wrapt the vital force
Of perished seasons, safe from ice and rot;
And where to sow he left me free, and what:
Only the winds would sometimes break their course,
Or scatter germs not mine. Ah me, how glad
I trod my new field with a boy's delight,
And gaily flung the good seed and the bad,
Careless of which and whither, wrong or right;
'T was joy enough to see each tender spear
Open its green leaves to the infant year.

Alas! the weeds are ranker than the flowers,
And choke the dwindled shootings of the corn,
Ere Summer's first moon fills her crescent horn.
I did not know how many painful hours
The sturdy toil of all my boyish powers

Must bend to my small garden, night and morn,
Its little plot with fitness to adorn;
How I must bear hot sun and drenching showers.
O many a sweet bud droopeth, sickly pale,
Under the leaf-shade of unfruitful weeds,
And creeping vines their icy meshes trail
Round the young Rose, whose stem with wounding bleeds;
So close they cling, their fingers will not quit,
And my poor heart bleeds, too, to suffer it.

To let the weeds grow longer I am loth,
They so encumber all my little land,
To pluck them up will mar the better growth
Which is so marr'd and stunted while they stand,
Disturb'd and broken, their rank odor doth
Impregn the airs around, till they expand
With growing deaths—so are they fell in both,—
Assailed or prospering;—drinking up the dews,
And feeding them with poisons for their gift.
Foul-breathing plants, ye shall not so abuse
The sweet-breath'd flowers, and spend their native thrift,
Teaching the winds my folly to accuse;
If yet your roots must fatten in my soil,
My whetted knife your flaunting tops shall spoil.

There is no evil that is wholly ill;
Even the rankness of the garden-weeds,
In their decay, the blooming rose-bud feeds,
And every blossom which they strove to kill,
Of true revenge takes now its utmost fill,
Turning the foul, that did it foul misdeeds,
To pleasant sweets, and all their ugly reeds
Transform to Rose, fair Pink, or Daffodil.
The wasting spoiler feeds the wasted spoiled,
The robber's booty makes the robbed more rich,
The hungry Ill is in its climbing foiled,
And the sweet Good hath found a prouder niche;
The newer fragrance of my Roses, now,
Will well repay the toil-drops of my brow.

Ah cruel weeds, when I have crop'd you so
Why will ye not your loathsome growth forbear?
My scanty field hath small room for the fair,
And ye, foul things! I would not have ye grow:
Oh not for such did he who gave, bestow
This pleasant land; for what vile things ye are
He brought not water with such tender care,
When the great thirst bent all the herbage low.
But yesterday I thought ye would have died,
Clip'd round so closely by my pruning knife;

To day ye lift your heads in growing pride,
And eat the flowers up with your lusty life;
With firm hand I must cut you down once more,
Though your sweet neighbors suffer for it sore.

The faithful tiller of his little field,
Who makes the Rain and Sun his ministers,
And every season its obedience yield,
With the great Life and Soul of all confers;
And, by the hoe and mattock he doth wield,
He, on his rough indurate palm, is sealed
Co-worker with the infinite Power that stirs
The huge life-pulses of the universe.
Better his little, with its blooming soil
Cherished by Nature's fond maternal kiss,
Than broadest leagues of prouder souls, where coil
Unfruitful vines in tangled wilderness;
The proud shall hunger in his hollow pride,
While the poor Gardener's wants are all supplied.

I thank thee, Father, that my field is small:
A broader plot might tempt the envious eye.
Now I can glance in quiet over all,
Unmoved by bandyings of the passers by;
Can see the white Rose trembling rise and fall,
As if a whiter breast beneath did lie;

Or hear the wind's breath, soft and musical,
Where nod the blue-bells to the clear blue sky.
And one sweet Soul, or haply two or three
Whose hearts are restful with their depth of love,
May pass light-step'd the wicket gate with me,
And hushed with Beauty's living presence, rove
Among the flowers, inhaling their sweet breath,
But with rude fingers putting none to death.

In gardens open to the vulgar gaze
I have seen flowers most sweet and delicate,
Whose purer beauty bred them fouler fate,
So pure, the hot breath of perpetual praise
Blighted their sweets, till no cool shower could raise
Their shriveled petals;—whom to adulate,
The unwise crowd besmeared their virgin state
With touch and kiss, and jostlings in the ways.
But no foul breath of praise or calumny
Shall taint the air around my blooming plants,
Close-hedged and hidden from the common eye,
And only open to a dear one's glance;
What rising odors fill the passing breeze,
These shall be theirs without, and only these.

I know that dwellers in the lands remote
Have richer fields, where all the golden South

Pours down its wealth, despite of storm and drouth,
And the whole purple year, in ceaseless rote,
Showers fast all fruits on which the senses dote,
Into the full lap of luxurious Sloth;
But not for all their wealth's spontaneous growth
Would I exchange my little toil-fed spot;
Their Olive's fatness I can gladly spare,
Be well content to lack their odorous gums,
For one sweet plant, which will not flourish there,
From the good soil of my wee garden comes,
A lowly herb, with fragrance ever pure,
For whose rich virtue all exchange were poor.

I knew not once how rich a largess laid
Hemm'd in my little garden's plot of ground,
Till in the midst, one blessed morn, I found
A tiny Spring beneath my busy spade;
O how it bounded from its ambuscade,
Like an old Gladness leaping from a swound,
And scattered its clear waters all around,
In whirls and crinkles, glittering as they play'd.
I thought my flowers were something fair before;
But fairest then, were brown and meager now;
The dunnest herb spread sallow bloom no more,
The loveliest kindled with a lovelier glow,

All brightness sparkled more divinely bright,
And the cloy'd air grew dizzy with delight.

Delightful flowers my garden never knew,
Till from its bosom gushed the crystal spring,
Around its brim in simple sweetness grew,
And showered their fragrance on the zephyr's wing,
Making the softest breeze that ever flew
More soft and bland, for their sweet blossoming;
In the still pool they rest on Heaven's blue,
With the deep stars that gird its nightly ring;
Though some have gone for whom I nurst their bloom,—
Souls purer than the buds their breathing fed,—
Yet *never* wasted was one flower's perfume,
Though far alone its silent leaves were shed,
Haply their blooms have shot ecstatic bliss
Through unseen lips that bent them with their kiss.

If they who loved my little flowers in life,
Do yet rejoice when most their sweets prevail,
How will they mourn when ills their good assail,
From rank weeds towering o'er the blunted knife,
The embattled North, pour'd down in sudden strife,
Or when still cankers gnaw, or some vile snail
Across their fair bloom drags his slimy trail,
While hungry reptiles in their roots are rife!

Ah me, will they not wholly fly my grounds,
  Dewing stain'd leaves with unavailing tears—
Weeping in sadness, for the oft sad wounds
  They bear in woundings of my bloomy spears!
Alas, sweet Spirits, do not leave me so,
Or my poor field will into desert grow!

But now I went to kiss a dewy rose,
  For love of one whose pale hand planted it,
  Just ere her last hold upon life she quit;
A lovely plant, ere torn by vengeful foes,
As any flower that in my garden grows;
  Through the long Sabbath mornings would I sit
  And think her pure soul did around it flit,
As viewless pinions broke its sweet repose;
Kneeling me there, a hateful *Centipede*
  Fell from my garments on its tender breast,
And all his hundred foot-tracks made it bleed,
  Staining the rich folds of its downy vest;
Thrice cruel worm, for this my Rose's hurt
I pluck'd him off and trod him in the dirt.

Trodden in earth, that yields beneath the tread,
  The trampled reptile from his grave doth crawl,
To soil anew the Rose's heart he bled,
  With half his length drag'd lifeless from his fall;

A loathsome weight, more vile for being dead,
While yet is clinging any life at all.
Nightly he comes, but when I wake is fled
Into some covert of the outer wall:
Witness ye dews that see my nightly search
Intent the many-footed fiend to slay,
How ill my heart brooks he should so besmirch
A single flower in all my fair array;
And thou pure moon, if thou thy lamp wilt lend,
This cunning foe one night shall meet his end.

I cannot tire of sitting by my Spring,
And looking down into its crystal cup
All day, to see the pure lymph bubble up,
As if it came from the bright clouds that swing
In the blue deeps: While all the blithe birds sing
Perpetual pæans on the hedgerow top;
And when night-chills their streams of music stop,
And every breeze has furl'd its gentle wing,
My spotless hyaline, girding in the sweep
Of the great stars, reminds ambitious care
How much of Heaven a little cirque may keep,
When blessed peace and purity are there;
It hath such life I would not quit it then,
But fall'n asleep could see it all agen.

Just in the centre of my living Well
A swan-like Lily floateth regally,
Set like the pupil of a soft blue eye,
But hueless; and it heaveth with the swell
Of the thrill'd pulses, when the young winds tell
Their love-tales to the waters. Tenderly
It kisseth the pure waves that underlie
Its virgin bosom, and the waves reply
With sweet embraces, as if Life and Love,
After long parting, met and mingled there
Sown from the full lip of Eudora's dove
Was the good seed of this my Lily fair,
And for her dear sake will I keep from harm
This sweetest bloom in all my little farm.

No day is long whose hours behold me muse
Above my Well-spring and its one white Lily,
And never blows the breath of night-winds chilly,
Or showers disaster in the falling dews,
When prolonged watches teach me to abuse
Health, and the sleep-god's summons answer illy,
Till he, sly Elfin! creeping slow and stilly,
Leaps on my lids to force what I refuse.
But all his triumph is not my defeat,
He cannot lock the postern gate of thought,

Where dreams glide in with their rehearsals sweet,
And play the scenes that waking fancy wrought;
Through all those hours the droughtless runnel flows,
And the pure Lily smiles on her for whom it blows.

Bright Spring, that waterest, with perennial flow
My little Garden from thy pebbled urn,
Thirsting and faint to thee I gladly turn,
And to the one white Lily that doth grow
Upon thy breast, rock'd gently to and fro
By the clear wavelets; sweeter than the fern
In sweetest hedges,—for you both I yearn,
Beauty that flows, and Beauty blooming so;
Thy waters feed a hundred flowers beside,
Thy perfume, Lily, rivaleth them all;
Joy is it deep to see thy clear waves glide;
And more to mark thy bosom's rise and fall,
Divine white Flower; translucent Pool divine;
Sweet child of a pure Mother, and both *mine*.

My Northern bound an oaken forest girts;
But down the rough North-east the winds may speed
To blight my tilth, or sow the thistle's seed;
Mornward the Windflower beds my fields environ,
Cowslips, and Daisies, and the Dandelion;
And o'er the rich South-east grow precious worts,
Wherewith the wise heal wounded Nature's hurts;

And splendor waves o'er all the Southern mead;
The golden Fruit-land bounds the broad South-west,
Where sober Pansies deck the generous soil,
And purple vines, that with true culture dress'd,
With fourfold bounty would repay the toil;
Round all the West, as o'er a dismal tomb,
Hangs a dark cypress-grove, and nodding poppies bloom.

My Father saith, what time my toil shall make
This little field to conquering order bow,
From wilds surrounding, I am free to take
New realms to subjugate with spade and plough,
Ever advancing, for sweet Beauty's sake,
Upon the rude wealth that empales me now.
Which way I till, is driven another stake
New lines to stretch, and the grim waste to cow,
So broad and noble is his great domain,
That endless toil an endless field shall find;
So fast on idlesse will the wild growth gain,
The running vine the sluggard's hand will bind
Even while he sleeps, and 'fume his senses so
That rousing he shall doubt whether he wake or no.

A Gardener's life must be a life of toil,
Beset with trials many and severe;
Battling his way against the fickle year,
With no kind Sabbath when he may assoil
His rugged palm, or from the knotted coil

Of carking cares once shake his strong limbs clear,
Till his purged earth's so pure he may not fear
The cruel tares that all his harvest spoil.
On barren winds careers the thistle's down,
And, rooted once, long mocks the rugged spade;
Rolls the fog-blight in wreathings dank and brown,
Blasting the hopes that all his toil had paid;
His hedge is scanty when the north-winds troop,
And hungry wants grin through its every loop.

Oft bending lonely in my tangled field
To pluck the worthless brambles from the vine,
Round my soft limbs would winds their scourges wield,
While clouds rushed madly o'er Heaven's sapphirine,
And, ere their bolts one warning note had peal'd,
Devoured in greedy haste the warm sunshine,
And belched the great shower on this head of mine,
As their huge forms in drunken revel reel'd:
Bent from its place the bladed corn would stoop,
And draggled flowers blush in the rude embrace
Of gloating earth, that forced their honors droop,
So basely bowed their cheeks to things so base;
And the close clinging earth, blush all they may,
Will but perforce let go so sweet a prey.

The fierce sun cometh, and with fiery lips
Drinks up the life-pulse of the pleasant herbs,

The ambrosial juices of the flower-cup sips,
Nor the hot temper of his passion curbs
Till half my blooms in forced embrace he clips;
Such gross despite my troubled heart disturbs,
And pray I rather for the murk eclipse,
When cloud to cloud the deep-mouthed cry reverbs,
That hunts his life-devouring beams away;
For fellest storms leave freshness in their track,
While only ruin marks his burning way,
With perished charms no dews can summon back;
Alas, my daily round of fortune seems
A tennis, bandied between huge extremes.

Maugre the ills that mar my scanty crop,
And blight the blooming of my goodly beds,
The embattled corn its victor ensign spreads,
The sweet flowers their deflowering foes o'ertop,
And sweeter dews of honied odors drop,
Feasting the winds that bowed their innocent heads:
Each widowed bloom a newer beauty weds,
Gilding the earth that earthed her beauty up;
Too hasty me, to add my murmuring breath
And selfish tears, to swell the showery gale,
Whose march I feared would tread my field to death,
Doubling the danger with my briny wail:
Now all the sunny bloom-beds bless the wet,
And but my fiery drops leave any stain-marks yet.

O blessed Sunshine, and thrice-blessed Rain,
How ye dissolve and warm the rugged soil,
Which else were barren, nathless all my toil,—
And summon Beauty, from her grave again,
To breathe live odors o'er my scant domain;
How softly from their pouting buds uncoil
The furléd sweets, no more a shriveled spoil
To the loud storm, or canker's silent bane;
Were it all sun, the heat would drink them up,
Were it all shower, then piteous blight were sure;
Now hangs the dew in every nodding cup,
Shooting new glories from its orblets pure;
Sun-fire and shower, I shrink from your extremes,
But with delight behold your blended gleams.

Revengeful Winter, for the joy I took
In my sweet Flowers, came down with chilly breath,
And in grey envy flouted them to death
With hissing wind-whips; while his gorgon-look
To solid marble turned my prattling Brook;
Yet on its face stood fixed the dimpling whirls,
In icy beauty, like the smile which curls
An Infant's cheek, that life but just forsook.
O gentle Flowers, I knew that ye must die,
My heart was sad to see it day by day,
Yet would I cling to you, and wonder why
Beauty must perish, Summer pass away,

And sweetest odors feed ungrateful frost,
While famished Zephyrs mourn that all are lost.

O, dear white Lily! wherefore must thou sink
Into the frosty death-realm, must thou shed
Thy soft leaves on the waters which have fed
Their bloom so fondly? Kneeling on the brink
Of the clear pool to kiss thy folds, or drink
The bubbling lymph,—no spirit-murmur said
That any freshness of thy life was fled,—
Yet then it trembled like a starlet's wink.
Thy pleasant leaves all scentless drifted on,
Like shivered hopes upon a troubled soul;
Now the last cherished one is sunk and gone,
And the bare pool sleeps chilly in its bowl;
O let me weep till my warm tears revive
The thrice-dear flower and keep its sweets alive!

Why mourn the perished glories of the past?
Why wrong with murmurs Death's paternal care?
Sire of Immortal Beauty, from his vast
Embrace with Infinite Life, spring all things fair
And good and wonderful; ye are not cast,
Like wailing orphans, on the desert bare,
To cry and perish. Life comes every where
With Mother-love, and strong Death garners fast
His bounty for her board,—for all that live

His tireless hands the harvest sow and reap,
He feeds alone those lily breasts which give
New strength to all on Life's white arms that leap;
Fear not sweet Babes in his thick mantle furl'd,
Now lull'd asleep, to wake in a new splendor-world.

Ha! Winter winds may be severe and keen,
And winter-rime, with treason's dagger, stab
The artless daughters of the Floral Queen;
And check the blithe waves, till they dare not blab
Their pretty secrets to their loves, who lean
From verdant banks to kiss their babbling lips;
And winter-clouds may hug in foul eclipse
The clear Sun, tarnishing its mellow sheen,
But Beauty, deathless, still survives the shock;
Those merry sprites, who feed the rose's bloom,
Back to the earth with all their riches flock,
Hiding the dead year's treasure in its tomb;
And free and joyous, in the icy ring
Of Winter's arms, leaps up the buoyant Spring.

Anon, when Winter's palsied hand no more
The sleety storm in giant fury hurls,
And tearful April, ceased from weeping o'er
Her Mother's grave, dead on her bosom curls,
Lo, May comes forth, with ill-concealed store
Of blushing rubies, diamonds, and link'd pearls,—

A ransom, opening Beauty's prison-door
To her, and her blithe troop of laughing girls.
Bird-like a few, whose full hearts made them brave,
Sang in the barren cells their hopeful song,
Whereat this Angel came, bright-winged, to save,
Melting the dungeon bolts and fetters strong;
Now all pure natures hold the heavens in calm,
With the deep power of their victorious psalm.

Free, free! the waters from my Well-Spring bound;
The immortal vigor of their central Heart,
From unknown deeps whose living pulses start,
Hath burst the bondage of their marble mound,
And through the field their sinuous flower-path found;
The cunning Buds renew their playful part,
And odors keen from leafy ambush dart,
Sweet upon sweet, till all the air around
With joy's excess grows giddy. Dying May
Her gems, unused, to infant June bequeathed,
And the dear Babe hath flung them every way
In her most gleeful mood, till they have wreathed
The brownest dell with beauties which bemock
The eyes of Angel-choirs that in the star-paths walk.

Joy! joy! a boon, more rich than any gem,
Queen Summer gives,—my Lily from its grave!
Oh green and lithe shot up its slender stem,

And two broad leaves spread out upon the wave,
Like hands in prayer uplifted; under them
The full bud nestled, and fresh odors gave,
As the pure white came peering by the hem
Of the green calyx: sweet and sweeter yet
It opened to the sunlight, like a sun,
Till all its golden heart lay dewy wet
In the cool morn; or seemed this peerless one
A full-orb'd Moon in the blue heavens set
Mid starry sparkles, as the bright waves run,
So white and queenly fair my glance it met.

'Tis wise in summer-warmth to look before
To the keen-nipping winter; it is good
In lifeful hours to lay aside some store
Of Thought to leaven the spirit's duller mood:—
To mould the sodded dyke in sunny hour,
Against the coming of the wasteful flood;
Still tempering Life's extremes, that wo no more
May start abrupt in Joy's sweet neighborhood.
If Day burst sudden from the bars of Night,
Or with one plunge leap'd down the sheer abyss,
Painful alike were darkness and the light,
Bearing fixed war through shifting victories;
But sweet their bond, where peaceful Twilight lingers,
Weaving the rosy with the sable fingers.

While yet the Summer bears herself aloft
So queenly dight, and with such plenty teems,
Let me not waste the hours in dalliance soft,
By airs ambrosial lull'd to sabbath dreams;
But with hard hand uprear, against the oft
Reverse of times, rock-laid, the oaken beams
Of firm defense; that when the year hath doff'd
Its glorious verdure, shall be left some gleams
Of the old Beauty, and a sunny spot
Redeemed from Winter's reign, where flowers may grow
In simple beauty, and the frosts come not,—
A little shelter warmed and guarded so
That sweetest things, from which the soul is loth
To part, may flourish with perennial growth.

Now Summer's green with Summer shall not pass,
Nor all my blooms with changing seasons wilt;
Fair in my field a sheltering cot is built;
Foundations, riven from the granite's mass,
Bear up the hewn oak like a shield of brass,
Against the North, to dare the wildest tilt
Of errant storms. With blessed sunshine gilt,
On cedar rafters slopes the roof of glass.
To the sweet South the wall is crystal clear,
Letting the smallest ray of gladness in:

But thieving frosts that creep for plunder here,
Pry all they can, they shall no entrance win;
Immortal Beauty, in one little sphere,
May dance her blithe round through the changing year.

Let the frorne North my sturdy walls assail,
Till all its engines with o'er-gorging break;
Insidious Frost low-creeping like a snake,
Swift-rushing sleet, or the quick crackling hail,
By treachery try, or fury, to prevail;
Let the North-west its howling winds awake,
And shout around me till their hoarse lungs ache,
And their spent wrath dies to a feeble wail;
Yet calm within, the silver dew shall rest
Fresh in the Rose's heart, its wonted place,
And my sweet flowers keep Summer's virgin vest,
Flying she left in Autumn's rude embraoe:
Beat on by wrathful storms, my cot shall be
An isle of Beauty in a raging sea.

What if the herd who see my glassy roof
Peer o'er the drifts, and glitter in the sun,
With snow-wreaths hung, Aquilo's cunning woof,
Do deem that life and dwelling there, is none,
Only the icy mockery of a home,
By the old year in childish dotage done,
Who mimics oft fantastic hall and dome
To cheat the wretch whose *eye* is wise alone?

Ye blessed ones who often meet me here,—
For that ye come the never-drifted way,—
Know well, within far else than icy cheer
Welcome your souls elect, though night winds play
Without, on shrill pipes, to the waltzing snow,
And the great trees creak, heaving to and fro.

Beneath my crystal roof a chosen few,
Not rudest storms can buffet from my door,
Sport glad, and glad'ning, though the cold winds roar:
Spirits all truthful, and so tender, too,
Their honey-kiss scarce shakes the quivering dew
From the soft petal, where it hung before;
And all my young buds pout and blush the more,
To tempt those lips to greet their rival hue.
In warm and loving hearts, there liveth sure
Magnetic force to swell the coyish bud
Into a bloom more delicate and pure,
And send a soul along its tingling blood;
For seems each flower more fresh, at every meeting,
To turn its fair lips to their gentle greeting.

Here, throned in beauty, reigns supreme delight,
Whether hoarse Winter growls along the wold,
Or walks majestic Summer, queenly dight,
Circled with glories woven manifold;
Whether dun war-ranks of marauding Night
Drive bleeding Day into his western hold,

Or morn, victorious on the mountain height,
Unfurls his tent of azure fringed with gold;
Here whitest thought, dove-wing'd, from purest hearts,
Hangs on the breath of every whispering flower,
And, through their sweets, its sweeter sense imparts,
A living joy to bless the weariest hour;
And yet so humble is my little all,
There is no room for envy's shafts to fall.

Some evil mind beside my runnel flung
The Deadly Nightshade, that it rooted there,
And with foul breathing choked the plundered air
It fed on, ere good hap revealed where clung
Its hidden vine, with rich red berries hung,
Mocking plain Virtue with an outward fair.
For, though its clustered fruit seemed passing rare,
Its false eye-sweets were poison to the tongue;
Plucking it thence defiled my naked hand,
And its firm grip destroyed with deathful wound
A cherished plant, which came from Holy Land,
And long was sheltered in my hardy ground.
Ah me! I wept with unavailing grief,
To see the shrunk herb perish leaf by leaf.

Dear far-sent Aloe! let my anxious toil
Witness, how painfully I sought to make

Thy shriveled root survive a foreign soil;
Shutting the searching winds, for thy dear sake,
From breathing on thee; and with glassy foil
Making the keen shafts of the frost to break
From their true path, shot forth to wound and spoil,
And giving dews thy fever-thirst to slake:
Yet week by week I saw thy leaves decay,
And mourned thy buds could never come to bloom,
Till all their freshness sunk consumed away,
And the warm soil, thy nurse, became thy tomb;
So prized, so lost, I never dreamed, be sure,
One perished weed could leave me half so poor.

O now lost herb I will not mourn for thee;
Out of thy grave hath sprung, more fair and fresh,
A graceful vine that weaves its delicate mesh
In mazy folds around the hawthorn tree,
That stands to guard it. How luxuriantly
Its lithe stem climbeth heaven-ward, girt around
With wondrous flowers, whose mystic sense profound
Erst tempted gazers to idolatry.
They saw the symbols of a Savior slain,
In bloom red-streak'd, stamen, and tendrils curl'd;
The Scourge and Cross, and Vesture's crimson stain,
Types of redemption to a fallen world;
But though to me such message is not there,
Its gorgeous bloom reveals a soul surpassing fair.

Sustained and sheltered in my sunlit bower,
Where mocking winds come not with bitter gibes,
In delicate beauty blooms the Passion Flower;
Tempting with innocent smiles—those maiden bribes,—
Heaven's own sweet limners, such as paint the shower,
And bannerets of Sunset's airy tribes,
To gild her robes. They, glad to swell her dower,
So eager crowd that each on each they press;
And sooth, poor Suitor, she can only pay
In bashful blushes and breathed thankfulness
Their kingly boons; yet more and more give they
For that sweet shame, which makes her need the less;
For worth with modesty is worth made more,
Which doubles still its still redoubling store.

From dewy day-dawn, to its dewy close,
Between the Lark's note and the Whippoorwill's,
With life as fresh and musical as fills
Their varied round, in quiet joyance goes
The faithful Gardener, spying out the foes
Of queenly Beauty, whom, for all the ills
They wrought her reign, his hand in pity kills,
That pure-eyed Peace may in her realm repose.
He bears cool water to the drooping flowers,
And gently crops o'er-flush'd exuberance;
Trains the young vines to crown imperial bowers,
And guardeth well fair buds from foul mischance;

Let others find what prize befits their powers,
  His deeds put smiles on Nature's countenance.

He wrongs the great Heart and the great Heart's Sire,
  Who saith that Labor is the curse of eld;
All Life delights to deck the proud attire
  In which the God is visibly beheld;
The boundless hungerings of the Soul require
  The regal task, unawed and uncompelled;
Those glittering drops, which manly brows perspire,
  Are gems more rich than idle pearls, and seld
Have crowned kings such inborn royalty,
  As the free tiller of the unbought soil,
Who from his rich soul casteth lavishly
  New forms of Beauty with unwearied toil:
Bend with high heart, and bravely, to thy task,
And Luxury pale the like as a proud boon shall ask.

While pleasant care my yielding soil receives,
  Other delights the open soul may find;
On the high bough the daring Hang-bird weaves
  Her cunning cradle rocking in the wind;
The arrowy Swallow builds beneath the eaves,
  Her clay-wall'd grotto with soft feathers lined;
The dull-red Robin under sheltering leaves
  Her bowl-like nest to sturdy limbs doth bind;

And many Songsters, worth a name in song,
Plain *homely* Birds, my Boy-love sanctified,
On hedge and tree, and grassy bog, prolong
Sweet loves and cares, in carols sweetly plied;
In such dear strains their simple natures gush,
That through my heart at once all tear-blest memories rush.

Merrily sings the fluttering Bob-o-link,
Whose trilling song above the meadow floats:
The eager air speeds tremulous to drink
The bubbling sweetness of the liquid notes,
Whose silver cadences arise and sink,
Shift, glide and shiver, like the trembling motes
In the full gush of sunset. One might think
Some potent charm had turned the auroral flame
Of the night-kindling North to melody,
Which in one gurgling rush of sweetness came
Mocking the ear, as once it mock'd the eye,
With varying beauties twinkling fitfully:
Low hovering in the air his song he sings,
As if he shook it from his trembling wings.

In Boyhood oft I shook with foolish dread,
When the long shadow of the cypress trees
Came creeping on by slow and sure degrees,

Till their high tops o'er all my Garden spread,
As sun by sun sunk in its dying bed;
"Will there not come a deeper night than these,
When the great darkness all the days shall seize,
And never morning rise again?" I said.
Then would I murmur 'gainst the blameless shade,
For smothering sweet Day in its heavy murk,
And weep that golden Light was so waylaid
By ruffian Glooms that in the wood did lurk,
For every eve my trustless Soul did fright
With sad foretokens of a time-long night.

Now solemn Beauty all the Spirit awes,
As sunset glories gild the eternal green
Of the dark cypress-grove, shot forth between
The draperied trunks, where faint day loves to pause;
Through the long aisles and breathing corridors
Streaming, like fire-gleams of an altar seen
In holy ritual, till its vapory screen
The smoke of incense o'er the temple draws.
Peace hovers there, o'er all those golden aisles,
Pure, as the first dream in the Land of Rest;
Day, like the righteous man expiring, smiles,
And the dun shades, no more in terror drest,
Stretch their long arms to point, far as they may,
To the Eternal Source of unextinguished day.

I cannot think that what the heart, made pure
  By trial, loves, shall ever pass away;
From golden deeps, whose floods eterne endure,
  Wells up the light spring of each fleeting day;
An infinite Beauty underlies, be sure,
Earth's transient hues, which seem its ocean-spray;
They are but twilight gleams—the clare-obscure,
  Where dusk Time meets the glories of For-aye:
Ye loved of earth, flower, bird, and dying Song,
  Though now I linger with a sad farewell,
Ye have but gone to lure my Soul along,
  To where your full paternal beauties dwell;
Slowly I follow, showering fond tears down,
As one who leaves his loved cot for a crown.

THE FIRE-STEED.

Where rise the tones of yon mingled crowd
The Fire-Steed stands impatient and proud;—
The hot breath rolls from his nostrils wide,
As deeply he drinks of the gurgling tide:
Before the flight of the wind he has come,
Afar from the town and its ceaseless hum;
He has called the strength of the wave and wood,
The tall white pine and the leaping flood,
To make the sinews of iron strong,
Which hurry his snake-like length along,
And send a thrill, quick, sudden, and warm
With conscious life, through his giant form.
He waits the touch of the practised hand
Which guides his flight through the wondering land.
And labors his broad and mighty breast,
With his fiery breathing half suppressed.
Stretch thy nerves of steel, and speed!
Wherefore pause, thou terrible steed?
"*Clank, clank, clank!*" Up *brake*, and away!
Time moves on leaden wings while you stay.

From the crystal fount he hath drunk his fill,
With a quicker leap his pulses thrill,—
And his unchained breath rolls free and fast,
As he goes to race with the flying blast.
With a firm, slow tread, he moves along,
Like a giant plying his sinews strong.
Now with a swifter glide he goes,
While his soft white mane on the zephyr flows;
And now his spirit is up in wrath,
And fast he thunders along his path!
"Kizz—kizz," away! away!
Like the lightning's flash or the meteor's play;
Bounding down with a rush and leap,
And hurrying on in his terrible sweep,
Through the hills and *over* the vales—
"Whiz-a-whiz," over the sounding rails.
Away for your life! from his lightning course!
He is coming right on with a hurricane's force;
His white mane back on the cleft air flung,
While the warning is spoke from his iron tongue,
"Ting-a-ring—ding-a-ting—ting-a-ring-ding!"
Off from the track while the merry tones ring!
I see the flash of his fiery eye,
As he sweeps with the breath of the whirlwind by,
On and on in his proud career,
Like a crag shot off from a comet's sphere.

His breathing is quick, and his chainless heel
Treads down the strength of the bending steel;
And he pours the smoke of his nostrils back,
As he thunders down on the trembling track.
Right on hath the panting charger sped,
And nought but the jar of his rapid tread,
And the distant tone of his startling neigh,
Can tell where the Fire-steed passed away.

1841.

THE LITTLE WORKERS.

THERE are merry little spirits in innumerable swarms,
Of an essence so divine, and so wholly crystalline,
The fancyless know nothing of their volatile forms;
Are faithless of their being, in their own dull seeing,
And deem the thrill a madness, which the Poet's heart warms,
As the glance of their dance, for a flash as they advance,
With overwhelming Beauty his brain and bosom storms.

They are busy in the forests, in the morning of the year,
When the relics of decay are hurrying away,
And the eager little buds so daringly appear;
They crowd in every budling—all emulously hudling,
With its juices and its hues,—each toiling in his sphere;
As a girl would unfurl her every fettered curl,
They ope the prisoned season to the merry-hearted seer.

They are busy in the shower, when the cloud is on
its track,—
Each governing a ball of the water in its fall—
And they shout their tiny glee when the bright globes
crack,
Into white spray flashing, with a music in their
plashing,
While the sheets of the shower from the sky hang slack;
And they sing, as they spring for their homes, on
the wing,
Till the green earth laughs with the merry, merry pack!

They are busy at the brook, as it glimmers in the dell;
And they pour its sunny drops from a million little
cups—
Then dance upon the ripples of the tide as they swell;
They attune the tiny tinkle of the reed-shivered
wrinkle,
And the gurgle in the gravel of a moss-hidden well:
How their bands clap their hands till the frolic
water stands
Like joy, mute for depth, in the pool where it fell!

Ye may see them in our mornings, on the edges of
the mist,
When its buddings, as of pearl, into roses unfurl,
And the earth turns gold to the mighty Alchemist;

So gorgeously enfolden, in rosy light and golden,
They are drunken with the glory by whose beams they exist:
Hue by hue from the view they are lost in the blue,
Like a loved one of us by the Death-god kiss'd.

They are busy in the clouds, with their many shaded hues;
In the meadow, in the air—they are busy everywhere,
From the sphering of a star, to the sphering of the dews;
But the little sprites are lurking, with a subtler underworking,
In the cunning human brain, and its fancies interfuse
With their higher vital fire, and the sparkles which aspire
To the Spirit of their spirits—to the glory which we choose.

DUALITY.

Calm, two-handed, self-possessed,
In their vital center,
Being's forces work or rest,
And to all things enter;
Light and shadow, worst and best,
Wed their mutual interest,
And throughout creation stand
On their Parent's either hand.

Into nature flows a power,
Outward flows a beauty;
Things whose life is but an hour,
Yet fulfil their duty,
Taking in their little dower,
Cold or heat, sunlight or shower,
And returning, to boon Nature,
Aptitude of work or feature.

Life is dual, but the goods
Come not paired together;
Twins, but differing in moods,
Bears the great World-Mother;

Alternating neighborhoods,
Ebb and flow of being's floods;
Hope, that bears its shadow, Fear;
Life, whose bridegroom, Death, is near;

Daylight with her locks of yellow,
  Wedding the dun gloaming—
Desdemona and Othello
  Into nature coming;
Brow-knit Doubt, whose sweet yoke-fellow
Faith is; Discord with his mellow-
Throated consort, Music, blend;
So, through all things without end,

Good and ill in mystic bands,
  Fact and hollow seeming,
Walk together with linked hands,
  Losing and redeeming;
Feeding ruin's desert sands
From the wealth of greenest lands,
And returning crowned from thence
With a new magnificence.

Nature's law is, give and take,
  Using, never keeping;
Lending for the borrower's sake;
  Sowing without reaping;

Leaves the dew's pavilion make,
Dews the flowers' thirsting slake,
Flowers give odor to the air,
Air divides it everywhere.

All have some good, nothing all;
  Having's taxed of Heaven,
Swift is slender, keen is small,
  Kind is overdriven;
Rarest cates are sure to pall,
Greenest summer has its fall,
Storms are eloquent but fearful,
Lore is deep, but rarely cheerful.

Every thing is at some time,
  Nothing always, sweetest;
The most precious in their prime,
  To their end are fleetest;
Plague devours the sunniest clime,
Terror glooms with the sublime,
Day's fire fadeth to night's embers—
Yet in stars its life remembers.

Through and through the woof of ill
  Runs the thread of goodness:
Winds that shake the wingéd mill,
  Feed us with their rudeness;

Frosts, that Autumn blossoms kill,
Ope the nut-burs on the hill;
Griefs, that settled heart-swards tear,
Fit for greener blessings there!

And the like innative check
With the good abideth,
Soundest rind, without a speck,
A diseased core hideth;
Calmest seas have many a wreck,
Highest hills the dizziest peak,
Sweetest lays the saddest tale,
Tenderest voice the shrillest wail.

Honey lures the armèd bee,
Wealth, the secret robber;
Father of the wildest glee,
Is the saddest sobber;
Thoughts of grandest prophecy
Verge upon insanity,
And the holiest joy we know—
Love itself—is kin to wo.

Hopeless fear, and fearless hope,
See not nature truly;
Dual, from the lowest up,
All her works rise duly;

And the wise their spirits ope
So to Being's sense and scope,
They can smile at grief, and weep
At their joys so calm and deep.

HYMNS FOR A MOTHER.

I.—THE DEAD BOY-BABE.

THERE is mourning in the hall,
Where, beneath the snowy pall,
Waiting for the hungry grave,
Like a lily on the wave,
Sleeps an infant's tiny form,
Now with life no longer warm.

Like a pearly morning Rose,
Sweetly taketh he repose,
Wet with Sorrow's holy dew,
Which the night of trial drew
From the overbending sky
Of a mother's earnest eye.

Who may fathom now her grief?
Who may dare to bring relief?
Who can reach her wounded heart,
Nor inflict a deeper smart?

Far away, ye thoughtless, go,
Break not on her hallowed wo:
Leave her bending, and alone,
At the footstool of the Throne,
Where amidst the burning Seven,
Holy Jesus maketh Heaven.
He will pour the healing balm,
And her troubled spirit calm;
He will bless the tears which fall
On the cold and virgin pall,
And her wasting grief control
To the whitening of her soul.

There is mourning o'er the tomb,
Where the Bud which could not bloom
Ere its sun went down the west,
Folds its beauty into rest,
Till its life again be born
In that sweet Reviving Morn,
When the Sun of Righteousness
Rises to redeem and bless.

There are tears which have been wrung
From the bosoms of the young,
To whom holy Love had brought
Deeper bliss than Hope had thought,

Fading now in wo severe,
More than Doubt had dared to fear.
Weep they sorely in the cot
Where their little one is not,
With a keenness of distress,
Nigh to utter wretchedness.

There the little cradle lies,
Whence their Baby's dawning eyes
Shed his blissful memories through
Their divine and deepening blue;
Were his snowy blanket, there,
Spread with less maternal care,
You might almost deem that he
Curled beneath it dreamingly.
But, alas! a Mother knows
In that still, and cold repose,
There is nothing like the rest
Of the heaving little breast,
Which, above the folded pillow,
Mounted like a tiny billow.

There his silent playthings are,
And his baby-robes are there:
Gently lay them all away,—
Wo's the mother's heart to-day:

Now her darling boy is gone,
They are sad to look upon;
And they waken grief afresh,
Wearying to soul and flesh.
In a day of fairer dawn,
When her keener pang is gone,
And her spirit's deep distress
Mellowed into quietness,
These shall be mementos dear
Of his brief abiding here,
Calling to her inward eyes
Sadly pleasing memories.

There is sorrow in the cot—
Sorrow that despaireth not;
For the mourners, faint and sad,
May look upward and be glad.
Lo, in Heaven is holy joy
Over the returning boy:—
Wingless wanderer to earth,
From the country of his birth,
Turning backward, ere his feet
Weary of the coming heat,
And the ever-thronging strife,
In the solemn march of life.

Folded in the arms of love,
To the blooming realms above,
Homeward he hath gone away,
And, no longer swathed in clay,
Lightly prints the rosy street
With the tread of infant feet.
While along the green he trips,
From the blooming of his lips,
Melodies for odors, fill
All the airs which o'er him thrill.

Cherubs young and heavenly fair,—
See, they gather round him there;
Hand in hand, a lovely ring,
O'er the blue they flit and sing,
And, around the sinless boy,
Clap their little wings for joy.
Sweeter sound the lyres of Heaven
As a gladder song is given,
While the ever-blooming groves,
Where the choir seraphic roves,
Back from every quivering limb,
Echo to a nobler hymn.

II.—THE BABE'S WELCOME IN HEAVEN.

Mother, mourning for thy child,
Let thy heart be reconciled;
Saints redeemed, and spirits blest,
Call thy lost one into rest.
Hark! upon the air along
Melts a low melodious song,
Blending its diviner sound
With the tones which float around
On the perfumed atmosphere,
Heard not by the common ear.
Now it trembles o'er the blue,
Indistinctly shivering through,
Like the last notes, from afar,
Of a silver-strung guitar;
Now its chime is faintly heard,
Like the carols of a bird.

"Welcome! welcome to another,
From the world a ransomed brother,
Plucked before the frost of wo
Laid his budding beauties low,
Or the stain of earthly crime
Marred the guileless spirit's prime;
Called away to be at rest
On the dear Redeemer's breast.

"Welcome from a world of sin,
Little Brother, welcome in,
Where the loving and the pure
And the holy will endure;
And the ransomed of the earth—
Children of the better birth—
From the withered son of old,
To the babe in swaddlings rolled—
Stir the Heaven's serenest calm,
With a rapture-breathing psalm.

"Rosy children, many a score,
Who have bless'd the world before,
Cheering, with their heavenly smile,
Mother-hearts a little while,
Here they join in radiant bands,
Here they clap their infant hands,
And their songs of simple praise
To the blessed Jesus raise,
Who of old unto his breast
Meekly folded them and bless'd.
Come and join them little Brother;
Linking hands with one another,
Come, and as you bound along,
Sing aloud the holy song—
Sung by all the hosts above—
Praises of Redeeming Love.

"Come unto the arms of Him
In whose light the sun is dim;
He was once a little child,
Human, and yet undefiled;
Long ago he went to bless
Yonder world of wretchedness,
Of whose darkness, sin and wo,
It has not been thine to know:
There he bore the load of life
With its stern and earnest strife,
Teaching man the loving faith
Which will blunt the sting of death;
There He lived, and there He died,
Hunted, scourged and crucified,
That a stubborn world might bow
And become like such as thou.

"Come and meet thy elder Brother,
Him like whom there is no other;
He will make thy lips to know
Where the purest waters flow,
And the sweetest fruits divine
In their golden clusters shine;
Guide thy wandering feet and eyes,
Down the vales of Paradise,
Where the richest meadows bloom—
Hushed beneath their own perfume,—

And the Sabbath air is fanned
By the holiest cherub-band.
He will teach thy infant tongue
How to hymn the eternal song,
And within His loving heart
Fold thee, never to depart.

"Come"—but oh the blessed tone
Of the Spirit-choir is gone!
And the vision melts away,
Like the beams of dying day.
Yet its holy light hath given
To the soul a hue of heaven,
As the sunset, on its track,
Flings a cloud of glory back;
And the song's melodious chime
Cheers the heavy heart of time,
From a world of varied bliss
Faintly echoing in this.

Let the stricken Spirit now
With its grief no longer bow;
But, in newer, purer faith,
Mount triumphant over death,
And the fear which palls the tomb
In the sable garb of gloom;

So on earth there shall be given
Glimpses of the upper Heaven,
And a Life which prophesies
Of the Eternal Paradise
Where the dear, departed boy,
Sweetly hymns a Hymn of Joy.

III—THE FIRST BORN.

Mystery! Mystery!
Holy and strange;
What a life-history,
Fruitful of change,
And endless of range,
Is folded here, sweet within sweet, like a blossom.
Darling of Paradise,
Pure as its dew,
Drop'd from the starry skies,
With their rich hue
In thine eyes' blue—
O dearer than life is thy weight on my bosom.

Beauty, how simple,
Yet holy and grand,
Curls every dimple
On white cheek and hand,
As eddies, breeze-fanned,
Are curled on a lakelet of full-budded lilies;

White as the moon is
Thy slumberous lid,
Bright as the noon is
The glance by it hid,
And as potent to bid
New bloom to a heart where unlove with its chill is.

Darling and treasure!
O, not for the rose,
Lily and azure,
That deck thy repose—
Or gleam when it goes,
Call I thee Darling—O, God-lent and hallowed,—
But for the wonder which
Weds thee to Him,
Deep-folded under each
Feature and limb,
And seeming to swim
In depths of thy bosom that heaves, many-billowed:—

But for the suffering,
Out of whose fire
Rose the best offering
Of my desire,
Retaught to aspire,
And came the white Sanctity of the Maternal;

For the deep thrilling
Of Hope and of Fear,
In the fulfilling
Of my divine sphere,
That holily near
Is bound by thy life to the Father Supernal.

Tenderly, tenderly,
Thee will I keep!
Purely to render thee,
In thy pure sleep,
To the angels who steep
Thy lids in repose and an earthly forgetting;
Leaving or living,
To yield, when I must,
In a fit giving,
My beautiful trust,
As unstained with the dust,
As spirit may be in a clay-moulded setting.

God keep and shield thee,
Sweet Baby mine!
Spirit-life yield thee
From his Divine,
In blue eyes to shine,
Serenely as stars through the azure night-arches;

Angels, with winglets
White and unseen,
Flutter thy ringlets
Made gold in the sheen
Of their eyes, starry keen,
As they guide thee, my Baby, in life's rugged marches.

IV.—THE FIRST SMILE.

Turn away the profanation
Of unsympathizing eyes,
Set with icy speculation
Where my lily Baby lies,
Overflowed with phantasies
Of divinest birth—
Dreams that down his wordless brain
Tremble like a golden rain,
Stirring lip and dimpled cheek
Into eddies of fine mirth,
All too fine to speak!

Ah, I see thee, and I *feel* thee,
O thou roseate first Smile!
How thy tiny circles wheel me
Up, where cherubs, in long file,
All my Baby's thoughts beguile

With their loving ways,—
Shaking down rich flakes of light,
Feather-like, from winglets bright,
Round my darling's living bed,
Till for joy he closer lays
To my breast his head!

Sweeter light than ever fluttered,
Timorous, through the barren sky,
When the anthems, planet-uttered,
Spoke in silence to the eye—
Or flashed pale Aurora by,
In the northern night,
Bubbles up from spirit deeps,
And so, fountain-like, o'erleaps
The sweet mouth and all the form
Of my beautiful Delight,
Flowing out love-warm.

'Tis the flush of new creation,
'Tis a Sun-Soul's rolling up,
Pouring light's divine libation
Over young Life's brimming cup,
As from earth's horizon top
Overflows the day.
Dimples open into bloom
In the track its beams illume,

And the odorous wreaths untwist
Their dim folds, and float away
Like the morning mist.

Ah, thou need'st not wake to tell it
By the laughing of thine eye,
Into mine, until thou swell it
Full with tears of ecstasy,—
Nor with palms struck daintily,
Baby!—for thy Dream
Shone out clearly, through the fresh
Unopacity of flesh
New and pure from hands of God,
As it were a lucid stream
From a crystal sod.

I have felt the warmer pulses
Of the hopeful heart of Spring,
When they bore, with swift revulses,
Far away, the Frigid King;
Felt the thrill o' the forward swing
Of joy's opening gates,
In my girlhood; and have known—
Deeper yet—the awakening tone
Of Love's cithern-voicéd call;
But thy sweet first Smile creates
Bliss above them all!

Smile on, Memory-haunted Baby,
In the heaven thou *hast not* left!
And in after years, it may be,
Grave Mnemosyné with deft
Fingers may untwine the weft
Of thy wordless thought;
And some Muse of her's may teach
All thy smiles to flow in speech,
Tempered to the sounding lyre,
And with tones celestial, caught
From the Eternal Choir!

TABLEAUX.

I.—PURE LOVE.

With brow serene as Summer's cloudless morn,
Just ere the Sun rides up the throbbing East;
With eyes that bend meek-lidded on the least,
Yet never shrinking from the proudest born;
Lips from whose drawn bow flies no shaft of scorn;
Bearing and tread obedient to the stress
Of noble thought, instinct with queenliness,
Her vesture floating like the wind-waved corn,
A seraph comes, fresh-hearted as the rain,
Or lily fragrant with its dew till noon;
Her white arm stretched to many a pure-eyed twain,
With the warm blessing of divine Love's boon;
Simple delights float round her everywhere,
Like the mild odors from her half-bound hair.

II.—SENSUAL LOVE.

Beneath a low front, where the loosened curls
Lurk, snare-like, in laborious unconcern,
Large eyes their languid orbs voluptuous turn,

Till the fired brain of giddy Folly whirls;
With conscious tempting her full lip unfurls
  Its honied blossoms, and the red cheeks burn
  With pride and shame, whose fire, ye well discern,
Sullies their crystal'd amethysts and pearls.
Her mien invites, while her just lifted hand
  Repels, coquetting, but to beckon back;
On purples couched, by dizzying odors fanned,
  She sighs her breath, with poison on its track,
And hearts are withered in its hot simoon,
Like dewless flowers amid a tropic noon.

III.—MORAL HEROISM.

He stands before me in his royal mood,
  With eyes that front the world with level light,
  Unquailed by hate, and lit, in Envy's spite,
With the frank beauty of infantine good;
  His bold brow threatful only with the might
Of its incumbent thoughts—an eagle brood
Nursed on that crag in lofty solitude;
  His lip firm bent, yet stirred as with the flight
Of inward smiles. His tall and upright form,
  From the set foot-sole to the swerveless brow,
  Glows with a manhood that can never bow
To the launched thunders of oppression's storm,
  Yet o'er the weak and worn as lithely bends,
  As a green willow o'er its pale flower-friends.

IV.—MARTIAL HEROISM.

An eye, bloodshot and still, with angry glare
  Threats Heaven—encaverned in the shaggy side
  Of brows that slope back to the steeps of pride;
His hard cheek scorns alike the lightning-glare
And Mercy's sunshine, poured availless there;
  Clenched teeth, and rigid lips, and nostrils wide,
  As of a war-horse, and the pitiless gride
Of his armed heel on bosoms red and bare,
Betray the spirit of that iron frame,
  Whose hand is welded to the steel it lifts.
Blood gurgles down the steep tracks of his fame,
  From human clay, piled high in livid drifts.
Rash men adore him, and his image fold
In reverent arms, and crown with purple and gold.

THE GROUND SWELL.

Though the moon in silver silence,
Floods the highlands and the islands
With a peace that cannot jar,
On the gates of Narragansett,
Storm-advancéd to the onset,
Plunge the billows from afar.

Heavily the long swell rages
On the ledges, and the sedges
Scattered, strow the foamy beach;
Many a garden fair it crosses
Of bright mosses, which it tosses
Up to human eye and reach.

Many a beauty have the waters
Pluck'd and brought us, aye and taught us
Of a wealth we never knew,
Which, in granite earthquake-chasm'd
Deep embosomed, sweetly blossomed
To the dark concealing blue;

Till an unseen tempest, urging
The wild surging, by the scourging
Of its wind-lash, cast them here,
To make glad, and blest moreover,
Beauty's lover, though they suffer
Martyr-pangs to give him cheer.

When a heart or spirit queenly
Most serenely foldeth inly
The white calm of holy thought,
Little are our souls aware of
Any jar of storms afar off,
From whose tramp are throbbings caught.

O, divine deeds, in the fitness
Of completeness, pour their sweetness
Round our gladdened souls' career;
And we bless the new revealing,
Never feeling the long reeling
Of the pangs that bore it here.

Deepest thoughts of love's devotion
Heave like ocean, with a motion
Grand from pulsings of a storm;
All the thrills which Poets lend us,
All the splendors valor renders,
With heart's agony are warm.

Finest feelings which we cherish
Nor let perish, farthest flourish
From the taint of vulgar reach;
And the woes that ruin past them
As to blast them, only cast them
Forth like sea-flowers on the beach.

WATER.

Life-blood of the mighty earth!
Flowing from creation's birth;
Throbbing, infinite and free,
In the heart-beat of the sea;
Pulsing down each river-vein
Of the green enameled plain;
Stealing up from deep repose
Through the crimson-bosomed rose;
Glorious thou, in all thy forms!
Whether whirl'd in midnight storms,
Or by wavelets rock'd to rest
On the snow-white lily's breast.

On thy pearly curtain fold,
Fringed with amaranth and gold,
Sunset, as her coursers linger,
Writes her tale with rosy finger;
And a blush is on thy mist,
As its brow is warmly kiss'd
By the opening lips of morning,
In the fresh love of its dawning;

Midnight saw its waveless deep
Like an ocean stretched in sleep,
With the dark-green trees and highlands
Rising o'er its breast like islands.

Bride of Light! O, Protean water,
Lo! the rainbow is thy daughter,
Clasping thee in radiant arms,
Even in thy hour of storms;
And in many glittering hues
See! the million-orbéd dews,
Sisters of the glorious arch,
Dance along thy showery march;
And the grass gives odors sweet,
Bathing all their "twinkling feet,"
As it bends along their track,
Till the light winds call them back.

Every old and gnarled trunk
In whose roots thy stream is drunk,
Feels along its breast a thrill,
Creeping unperceived and still,
As the sun with magic art
Melts into its frozen heart;
Till its warm and hueless blood,
Crowding into leaf and bud,
Clothes in green each giant limb,
Gorgeous as the robes that swim

Round the knights of Fairy-land;
By the breath of roses fan'd.

O, thy coming down is sweet,
When, oppress'd by summer's heat,
Bowing, every herb and flower
Prays thee for the pleasant shower;
See! each thirsting plant holds up
For thy gift its little cup;
While on every grassy spear,
Hangs in light a grateful tear,
Orbs of beauty bathed in gold
On thy sun-lit way are rolled,
Each fair orb a mimic world
Through the sky in splendor hurled.

Dripping down the mossy well
Where the cold frog loves to dwell;
Bubbling in thy granite urn
Where the day-beams never burn;
Tinkling in the pebbly run,
Grass-defended from the sun,
Rustling in the little fall,
Thou art sweetly musical;
Never bird or voice divine
Hath a gladder tone than thine,
Man hath richer earth-gift never—
Ne'er more spurned was gift or Giver.

THE STORM-WALTZ.

A DREAM OF THE WORLD'S PROGRESS.

The fields were brown with Summer's breathless heat,
  And sere leaves, in their first faint lisp
  Of Autumn, touched their edges crisp,
And dry grass rustled to the passers' feet,
While withered earth against the brazen sky
  Breathed unseen poisons from morass and fen,—
Seemed anger burning in the Sun's red eye,
  And Hope's torch dying in the eyes of men;—
Till, on a morn when sultry night had press'd,
Like a hot vapor, on the sleeper's breast,
A soothing breath, as if an Angel's wing
Struck the dull air to ripples, 'gan to sing
Through dusty leaves, and moisten their pale lips,
    Which, to their frailest tips,
Felt life again, even as a gladness slips,
Down human pulses at the breath of love;
    And they who woke smiled clear
  To the dark skies above, which frown'd severe,
A moment smiled upon the tempest's path—
When at a flash the dun vault split in wrath

Of crackling fires, which tore their dome in sunder,
Shook the pained sleepers into sudden wonder,
And jar'd the wide earth with their trundling thunder!

Then the winds smote
The shivering forests, with their writhing lashes,
The wrung boughs seemed to float
On the wild breakers of the storm,
Whose dash of spray, o'er the black form
Of reef-like clouds, was the keen lightning's flashes.
Men trembled at the blue
Unearthly fires, which flew
Like the hot finger of Retributive Wrath,
In menacing gesture shaken from the folds
Of his black robe, at secret holds
Of awful guilt; and though the crinkling path
Of the quick Terrors led from Heaven, they fell
Rather like bursting meteors of Hell,
Than aught divine, if one knew not how clear
Those flames should purge the boiling atmosphere.

One bolt of the avenging fire
Ran hissing down the village spire
Like a red serpent, and with burning tongue
Singed through the curtains and the hallowed Book,
While the pursuing thunders shook

A wide breach in the heavy walls,
Where even yet the mellow daylight falls,
Though the poor peasants sigh
To see the ruin, as they saunter by:—
The thunders broke, as earthquake broke before,
The iron firmness of the prison door;
Shivered the blind, black jail,
Whose windowless brows frowned o'er the smiling vale,
And men looked down with shuddering awe to see
How the keen bolt clove down their gallows-tree.

I rose among my trembling peers,
And, if not all unshaken by their fears,
Felt more a wild delight
In the wild power of storm and fire,
Than any terror, when a grander sight
Than ever dream yet granted to Desire,
Grew on my vision, as the rising sun
Made the swift clouds a glory every one.
A crushing whirl of wind and rain
And eddying vapors, thunder-black,
Was mingling all the western plain
With its own boiling rack;
I saw the sunlight when it kiss'd
The roughest edges of the mist,
And how the tattered hem
Of the whirl'd clouds grew rosy as a gem.

At first a blue eye, faint and very dim,
Seemed into light an instant's flash to swim—
A serene eye that startled me
With memories of infancy;
Then a white arm trembled out
From the white clouds' rolling rout,
Till a sudden smoke-wreath draped
The uncertain form, half-shaped;
Meanwhile, over all, the sun
Flung his floods of rose and pearl,
And the noises of the whirl
Grew harmonious one by one.

When my eye had lost its wonder,
And my ear grown heedless of the roar,
In a long pause of the falling thunder,
Came the angel-glimpses more and more.
All the wide plain, where the storm
Trailed the cloudy foldings of its form,
Twinkled with the glimpsing feet
Of most beautiful beings, seen
Momently, in musical beat,
Gliding tremulous and fleet
Along the reviving green,
And their heaving bosoms heaved
The white foldings of their vests,
Till a sudden whirl bereaved

The delighted eye
Of its radiant guests,
As they floated by,
Into vapor, suddenly.

Anon the bent arch of that three-fold bridge,
Whose seven-fold colors glorify the world,
Span'd with its light—from ridge to craggy ridge
Of pier-like clouds embathed in gold—
The kindling splendors which beneath it roll'd,
Rounding with calm the loud life as it whirled;
The long, curved sheets of rain
Pictured against the western sky,
Were bent like full sails as they swept the plain
In intricate circles, which my open eye
Yet knew to follow in their spiral mazes,
That, intervolved, led on harmoniously,
Twining their misty strands through never jarring phases.

Then as I looked to trace the bending line
Of falling rain, to the green plain,
Beneath each curvéd column a divine
And beautiful Being danced along the way,
Airy and delicate as 't were the spray
Of the crushed diamonds shivering on the grass,
And fashioned into form as the bright shower did pass.

Each round her fellow whirled,
Like little eddies curled
Around a Swan's white bosom,
Or waving Lily-blossom.

Everywhere,
Floating, fluttering in the air,
Sparkling with a thousand hues,
Flashed their skirts of molten dews,
Radiant eyes and glorious faces
Lit at once a hundred places,—
Coming, going, fading, glowing,
Like the colors in the flowing
Stream of Autumn's noonday breath,
Over the fluttering leaves arrayed by kingly Death.
Rounded arms of white entwined
Veiléd forms whose faintest traces
Would have maddened or struck blind
Holy Art in days of wonder,
While the fair ones moved in chases,
Wheeling, reeling, and crossing under
The waving shower-march, swept sublime
In measured chime,
As they waltzed to the mellowed thunder.

Lightest limbs of rarest moulds,
Pictured in the fluctuant folds

Of their skirts of pearl-light, seemed,
In their motions and their form,
As if music, Angel-dreamed,
Had leaped forth, alive and warm,
To bear up the shapes of that harmonious storm.
Not rapider patter'd the drops that beat
On the kindling grass, than their sandaled feet,
Not lither the long grass reared its head
From the soft shower-fall than their buoyant tread.
Each graceful whirl of a single twain
Was type of the full dance that swept the plain,
And the whole bright show,
As it wheeled below
The span of the unmoved rainbow-arch,
Was type of the heavens and their starry march,
Rolling along, unjarring and grand,
Beneath the curve of God's bended hand.

The grass grew green and beautiful as a gem
Of emerald, and the flowers more clear
Than rubies, when their lips could touch the hem
Of those shower-angels' garments; all the sere
Leaves of the forest glittered with the sheen
Of dewy starlets, and enameled green,
Which crowded all the boughs, while birds sang joy
between.

Though a few only saw the music-dance,
And men but heard the wild crash of undoing ;
With no revealings of the calm advance,
Saw but the diverse aims, or aimless whirls
Of Powers whose Maelstrom hung its billowy curls
Over their homes with menaces of ruin,—
The serene band of beautiful Beings passed,
Too glad and loving to repine at men ;
Knowing the glories which their storm-waltz cast
Lavishly round them, would compel at last
Human thanksgivings, though we murmured then.

ANTIQUES.

I.—TEARS.

Go Home if thou hast any grief, and tell
Thy Father what it is;
The world is ill, and may not use thee well,
And *thou* hast gone amiss.
Weep on thy Father's bosom, he is kind—
Tell *all* thy mind;
Grief cankers, pent—but spent
Purgeth, as water-runnels purify
By flowing,—and great showers clear the sky.
God will not ask thee 'hast thou sinned or no?'—
When thou hast kneeled,
For if thou had'st no wound, thou would'st not go,
Moaningly so,
And beg Him, to be healed.

If thou hast sorrow for thy sinning, such
Salveth its own heart-sore;
Yet if thou pinest, hopeless, overmuch,
Thou sinnest more.

God loveth tears, but rather the good cheer
Of a good heart, if so
It hath not—for ill seeding of whilere—
To reap more present wo.

Thou shalt not want beads in thy rosary
When thou wilt pray:—better than they
Thy tears shall serve;
Good saints will keep them for thy jewelry,
Till Doom-day, in reserve.
Then all the tears which thou did'st count for sin,
Shall shine upon thy head
Like pearls, to grace thy coming in
Unto thy heavenly kin,
Weeping for joy of them that were in sorrow shed.

II.—ASKINGS.

Star, that shone in Bethlehem,
Purer than the purest gem
Upon mortal diadem,

Chief of all the stars that are,—
Shine into my soul, and there
Leave thy beauty heavenly fair.

Robe, that veiléd Jesus' form,
Come and make my bosom warm,
Shield it from the outward storm.

Voice, that bade the wave be still,—
Laden with the Almighty will
That the wild sea must fulfil,

Speak unto the storms within—
Swelling waves of shame and sin,
And a blessed silence win.

Power, that from the grave could call
Swathéd bondmen of the pall,
Me uplift from Adam's fall:

Give me life anew to live,—
Life that earth can never give
With its comforts fugitive.

Vine, that art of all preferred,
Clustered with the living word,
O'er the walls thy yard that gird,

Droop with fruits, that I may press
Sweet wine, for my thirstiness,
From thy purple wealth's excess.

Shepherd of the heavenly fold
Me upon thy bosom hold—
Lamb, forsaken in the cold.

Master, of the little Few,
Let me be thy servant too,—
Servant without guile, and true.

Victor, who didst conquer death
By thy living power that saith
Be, to all that perisheth,—

Speak, that I may rise again,
When, by evil passions slain,
In the grave my soul hath lain.

Christ, that over all things trod,
Earth and Death—and rose to God,
Let my feet like thine be shod;

So to rise and be at rest,
Where the true lean on thy breast,
And the least of all are blest.

III.—THE TRULY BLEST.

Blest is the man who maketh Truth his guide,
And even as with a lamp doth walk thereby,
Keeping his heart in blameless verity,
Minding, much heedful, that he turn aside
From ways ungodly, and self-loving pride

And vain desire, which are idolatry;
The same is he the Lord doth justify,
And in his bosom doth Christ's love abide.
He shall not stumble, though his way be set
In slippery places; He who doth up-stay
The raven's wing shall keep his feet alway,
Nor earthly cares nor trials shall him fret;
But all sweet concord will his spirit sway,—
And love that loveth, whatsoe'er would let.

ELLEN BYRNE.

O God! we know that thou art just
And merciful in all thy ways,
Yet Lord, in earnest grief we must
Weep sadly, even while we praise;
Must mourn the vanished loveliness
Which cheered us like an Angel's smile—
The seraph-goodness, sent to bless
Our spirits, for a little while,
Then backward unto Thee to turn,
With the pure soul of Ellen Byrne.

She came, as comes the golden light,—
A sunbeam to the freezing heart;—
Clothed, even here, in Heaven's own white;
Ah! why so early to depart?
She kept the soul thou gavest her,
Untarnished, in this world of sin,
Her every thought a worshiper
Before the holy shrine within;
Her every deed an offering, given,
Pure and acceptable, to Heaven.

Mourn! mourn! for what the earth hath lost,
Poor outcasts, wretched and forlorn,
Sad spirits, scarred and tempest-tost,
Mourn! for a loving soul hath gone.
A heart whose every pulse beat high
With pity for the scorned and poor,
Warm with unbounded sympathy,
Shall throb for you, oh never more!
Weep! though your tears can ill repay
The goodness, which hath passed away.

Dark bondman! doomed in chains to pine,
And bleeding from the oppressor's rod,
Mourn, but in hope,—a friend of thine
Hath gone, to plead for thee with God.
When speeding to thy home afar,
The land of refuge to the slave,
Led onward by the Northern Star,
One moment bend above her grave,
And wet with grateful tears the urn
Which holds the dust of Ellen Byrne.

Thy woes were often on her tongue,
And many were her prayers for thee;
And sorely was her kind heart wrung
For crushed and wronged Humanity.

The up-gushing of a boundless love
In such a great and generous heart,
O ! it is mighty, to remove
Bondage, and burst its chains apart;
And it shall work its pure intent,
Though she hath gone to Him who sent.

Friends! in whose souls her quiet love
Was like a holy Presence, given,
God's witness, from the world above,
Of that, which ever reigns in Heaven;
Weep! for in tears there is a balm
For the sick heart's too keen distress,
Soothing its bitterness to the calm
Of deep, yet quiet tenderness;
Weep! or the grief-wrung heart will bleed;
For she hath been a friend indeed.

Mourn Sisters! ay, I know ye will,
Yet wrong her not with your *despair;*
Though Ellen's heart is cold and still
In death, her spirit is not there;
She lives! and, fondly may we trust,
Will visit oft the low, green spot,
Where ye shall bend above her dust;—
Inspiring, even when heeded not,
Your souls with higher hope and bliss,
And life, diviner far than this.

Mother! the deeper pang is given
To thee, for in her life was thine;
Yet murmur not; she bends from Heaven,
White-robed, and breathing songs divine,
Heard only when the soul in deep
Devotion wrestles with its God,
What time the star-eyed Angels keep
Their night-watch o'er the dewy sod;—
And there thy sainted Ellen waits,
To greet thee at the golden gates.

Yet we *must weep*, who knew her worth;
Yea, weep that such a guileless heart
Should mingle with the common earth,
Though "sanctified in every part;"
That one sent here to show how much
Of goodness may be swathed in clay,—
Even when the world hath need of such,
Should pass from us so soon away;
In deepest sorrow shall we mourn
Above the grave of Ellen Byrne.

But while we cherish, in each breast,
The virtues, which have made her form
A temple for the Holiest
Reared, with an altar ever warm,—

With joy to us shall Death unbar
The portals of the land of Rest,
Where, radiant as the morning star,
She bends adoring with the blest;
And gladly shall our souls return,
To meet in Heaven our Ellen Byrne.

EPITAPH.

Sorrow and joy above her ashes sway;
Her loving trust and hope, her sympathy
And her unstudied goodness could not die;
For this our souls are glad:
But that decay should touch the clay
Which bound, within her stainless breast,
Such holy virtues in so sweet a nest,
For this what soul would not be sad?
For this our eyes are tearful when we turn
From the low grave which claims the dust of Ellen Byrne.

TRUST.

The hope of a wise heart is Prophecy;
God tortures not the souls that purely aspire,
With a vain hunger and a bootless fire;
Love lives to bless us, though for love we die;
Beauty, to fill her darling's longing eye;
And every good, for every good desire:
Want is the garner of our bounteous Sire;
Hunger, the promise of its own supply.
We weep because the joy we seek is not,
When but for *this* it is not,—that we weep;
We creep in dust to wail our lowly lot,
Which were not lowly if we scorned to creep;
That which we dare we *shall* be, when the will
Bows to prevailing Hope, its Would-be to fulfill.

All suns are not light-bearers, but around
Some black, majestic orb, its flaming peers
Grind down the darkness with their golden spheres,
Their fire-hearts yearning, through the dim profound,
To their strong brother, in his utmost bound
Unwinding the still gloom of lampless years.
So yearn the bosoms of high-hearted seers,
Drawn by the grandeur of a vast unfound;

They flash their bright revealings from afar,
  Marching triumphant through the cloven dark;
And men know not that some invisible star
  Circles their flight unerring to the mark;
Nor yet know they their overmastering Power,
But that it shall appear in its appointed hour.

THE WREN.

In the twilight of the morning,
  Ere the infant Day was strong,
To the Poet's little window
  Came a gush of joyous song;
Here or there it seemed it was not,
  For it came from every where,
Thrilling as if it were uttered
  By the circumambient air.

Though the Robin sang his matin
  On the budding walnut tree,
And the many birds were quiring
  All around as glad as he,
In the spirit entered only
  That diviner burst of praise,
As the earth, like charméd Memnon,
  Answered to the warming rays.

Needs must then the viewless spirit
  Of the lingering breeze rejoice,
While, with more than syren sweetness,
  Sang that universal voice;

Needs must he be still and wonder
At the clear and joyous thrill,
Uttered from the tongueless Silence
Brooding over vale and hill.

Looking from his little window
Saw the Bard a tiny Wren,
On the low wall of the garden
Sitting, where her nest had been;
Then he knew the living fountain
Of that gushing flood of song,
And his spirit held him musing
On the merry creature long.

Marveled he that one so humble,
And so little ken'd as she,
Yet could charm the ear of Morning,
With so great a melody;
While the Hawks and mighty Eagles—
Lords and regents of the sky—
Harsh and cruel and unlovely,
Gave their terror-sending cry.

Marveled he that one so gifted
Loved the humbler paths of earth,
While the proud and stern were claiming
Nobler dowers and heavenlier birth;

But there came a voice of wisdom,
Heard within the soul alone,
'T was the Bard's attendant Genius
Speaking to her chosen son:

"Poet, in thy simple chamber,
Least and humblest among men,
Learn a high and truthful lesson
Of the unambitious Wren.
Know that greatness is not goodness,
And the proud are not the pure;
That the meekness of the gentle,
Hath its boon of pleasure sure;

"That the lay which most delighteth,
Is the music of the Heart,
Uttered movingly and earnest,
Fraught with life in every part;
That the simple songs of Nature,
Chanted in her tender strain,
Stir the soul with sweet impulses
To re-echo them again;

"And for greatness sigh no longer,
But with calm eye fixed above,
Sing and *live* thy glorious poem
In unstudied TRUTH and LOVE!"

Ceased the song and ceased the spirit,
But her words within were sown,
And a high and trustful being,
From that precious seed hath grown.

A SYMBOL.

Over the still deep rose the morning sun,
Like Ocean's monarch from his Triton's cave;
A little moment, ere his race begun,
Two kindled orbs their mingling glories gave;
And ever up as the great Splendor run,
Down, down his image sunk into its grave;
Till now, far past their mutual horizon,
They speed to mingle in the western wave.
Even such is Life. The sunrise of our birth
Reveals Heaven wedded to the nether sphere,
Still lower seeming sinks the life of earth,
As the divine Soul mounts in proud career,
Till, from the torn wave soaring to the sky,
The Earth-life joins once more its Immortality.

THE HOME-GONE.

An why should bitter tears be shed
In sorrow o'er the mounded sod,
When verily there are no dead
Of all the children of our God?

They who are lost to outward sense
Have but flung off their robes of clay,
And, clothed in heavenly radiance,
Attend us on our lowly way.
And oft their spirits breathe in ours
The hope and strength and love of theirs,
Which bloom as bloom the early flowers
In breath of Summer's viewless airs.
And silent Aspirations start
In promptings of their purer thought,
Which gently lead the troubled heart
To joys not even Hope had sought.

While Sorrow's tears our eyes have wet,
Shed o'er the consecrated dust,
Too much our darkened souls forget
The lessons of enduring Trust.

Not then we heed the hallowed joy
Their presence would inspire in us,
That Time or Fate cannot destroy,
Or even Death make only thus.
Not then we mark the cheering light
Of their serene and love-lit eyes,
Which look out from the infinite,
Like stars from yon unbounded skies.

Though Sorrow brings her hidden good,
And tears their dewy benison,
Not always o'er the Spirit should
Their darkness hide away the sun.
The rain whose blessed coming nurst
The sweetest flower of blushing Spring,
If through its cloud no sunlight burst,
Would blight her loveliest blossoming.

'Tis well the heart can loose its tide
And gently pour the soothing tear,
When joyful Hope is crucified
In death-pangs of the loved and dear;
But when from her sepulchral prison
Her Angels roll the grief away,
Then yield we to the new arisen,
And own her everlasting sway.

With spirit-glance undimmed by tears,
Look upward and forget the clod,
For, brighter than yon million spheres,
They wheel around the throne of God.
And echoes from their choral song
Come quivering down the blue expanse,
Like murmurs from the insect throng
That on the beams of sunset dance.

Let living Trust serenely pour
Her sunlight on our pathway dim,
And Death can have no terrors more,
But holy Joy shall walk with him.

UNMEANT SERVICE.

The bees which all day long with tireless care,
In golden deeps of bloomy cups and bells,
Seek bread and honey for their mystic cells—
Tiny co-workers with the enamored Air—
From flower to flower, with aid unweeting, bear
Yearnings which Buds blush into Blooms to tell—
Their love's fruition guarded long and well
By the great Mother in her secret lair;
So works our human o'er its selfish will;
Seeking the honey of its own desire
It doth God service faithfully and still;
Around his altar feeds the eternal fire
From its low passions, like the carrier Bee
That gives the flower he robs, an immortality.

ICE CRYSTALS.

Ye may have seen, when, on some winter morn,
The first warm breath of home-life, waked again,
Touched with a kiss the cold-cheek'd window pane,
Into what fine and delicate figures drawn,
The keen ice crystals mock'd the viney lawn;
How the sharp shuttles of the invisible frost
Wove their swift shapes of beauty, flower and tree,
Till bough on bough, with foliage intercross'd,
The bright mass grew to thick obscurity.

So with fine thrillings of unuttered Thought,
Clear Beauty trembles through the Poet's brain,
Into fair shapes by its own shrinking wrought,—
His heart-breath crystalized with delicious pain,
Soothed by some silent hope to bless the earth—
Till crowding, form on form, to be borne forth
Into full utterance, all its life is lost;
Stark lies the Beauty in expression's frost,
Frigid, confounded, and of little worth.

THE WANDERER.

The World is wide to walk on weary feet,
With step by step along each lengthening mile;
Never the sunbeams on a cottage smile,
Where Love and Quiet build their cool retreat,
But, inly sad, I ask a home as sweet;
Then happy dreams a little way beguile,
Rounding the wide earth to a tiny isle,
Where all delights in a green circle meet.
But the broad world re-pains my lifted eye;
I wander homeless by a thousand Homes;
I tire of this unbounded liberty;
'Tis no right freedom that forever roams:
A Cot, a green Field, and sweet company
Of Wife and Babes, were world enough for me!

PRIMAL MUSIC.

Luna! Life is very holy
To the spirit who reveres
God, in all its smiles and tears,
Triumphs proud and trials lowly:—
But it is a melancholy
Way, for one whose heavy ears
Are so earthly-dull, he hears
No sweet melody o'ertopping
The discordant clang of wrong,
Chiming like the dewy dropping
Of an angel's shower of song.
Listen silently and long,
Luna, till thy soul hath captured
Notes of the triumphal song
By which all the golden spheres,
Wheeling their eternal years,
Make the crystal heavens enraptured,
And the blessed tune shall be
A well-spring of Melody,
Springing up to joy in thee;

Or a chain of charméd sweetness
Holding, with a prevalent awe,
Thy whole nature to the law
Of Life-Music, which shall draw
Deeds instinct with its completeness
Out of every thought and motion,
Till thy whole Life is Devotion.
Music, borne to tongue or string,
From the daily pulse must leap,
All our common breath should sing,
And our steps unfaltering
Time with Angel-citherns keep.